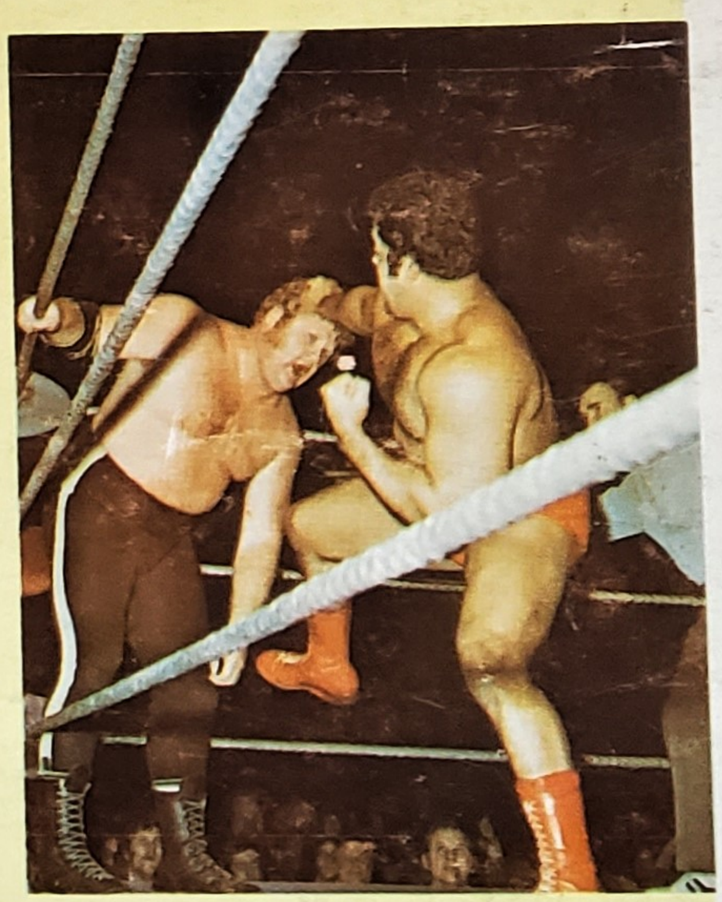
PEDRO

His Life Story

Over 100 Photos

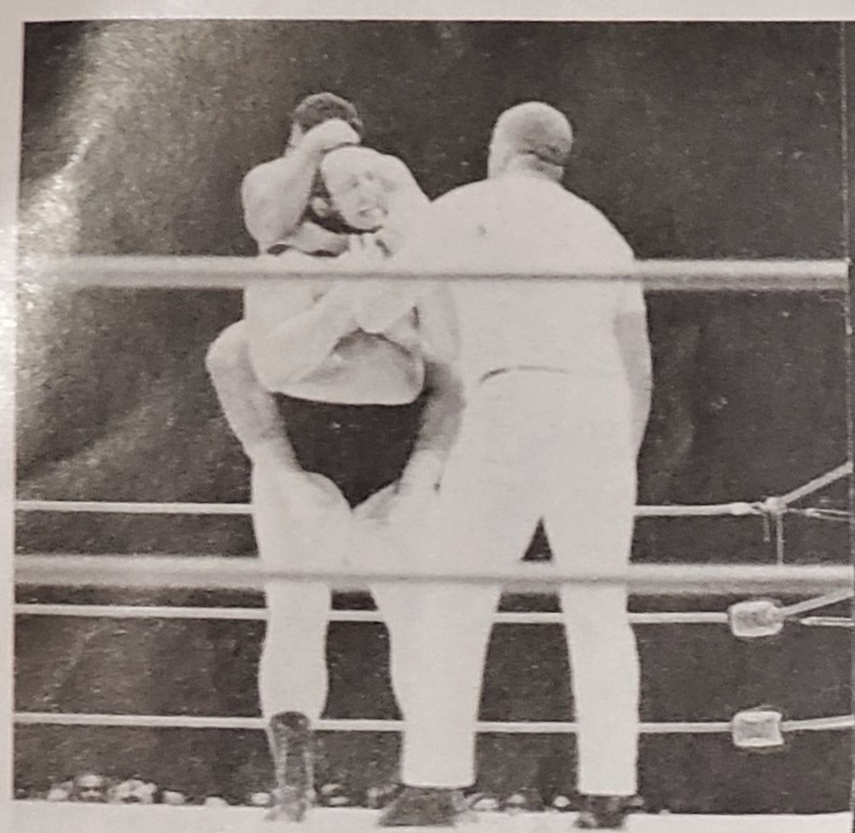
La Historia de Su Vida

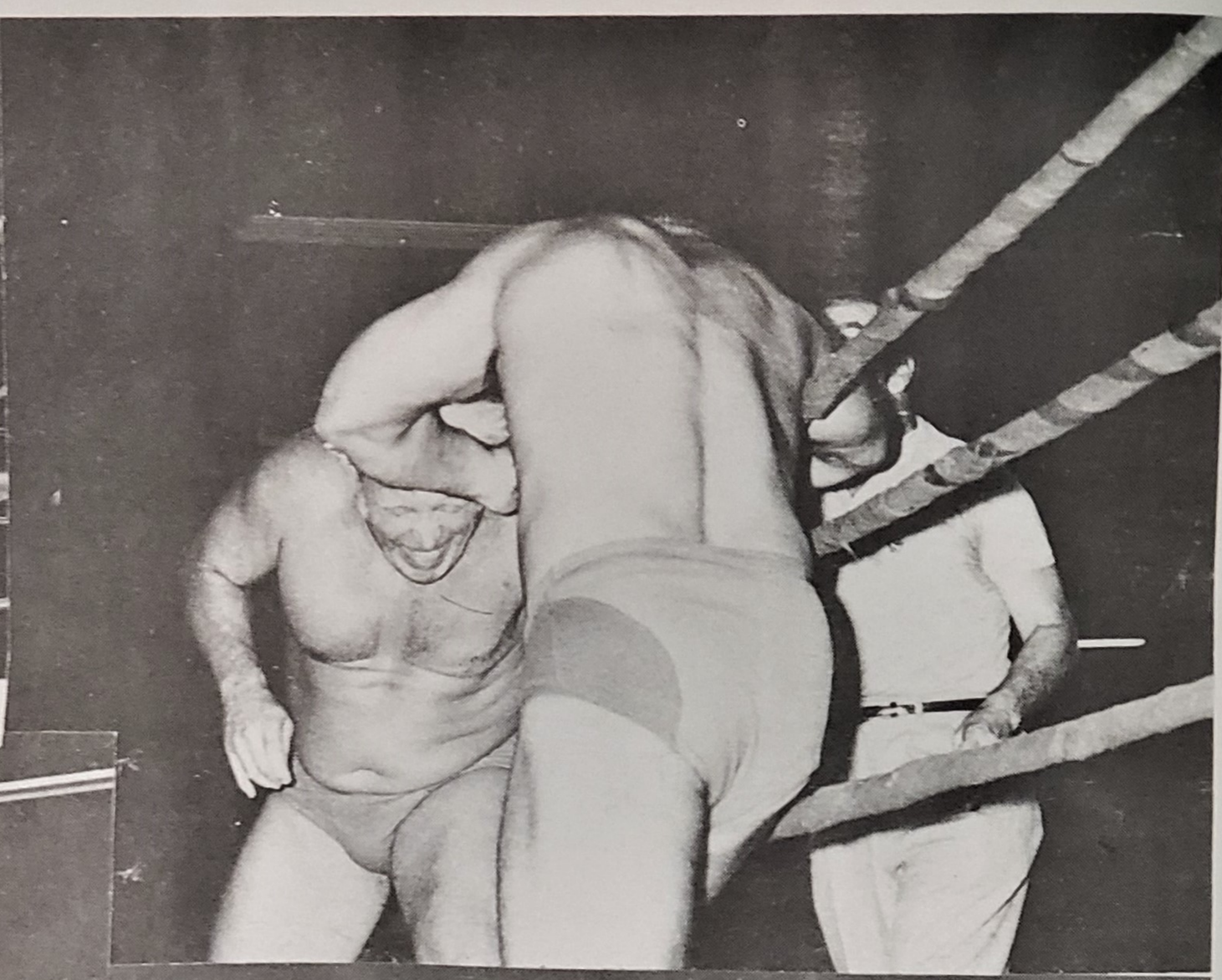
Mas de 100 Fotografias

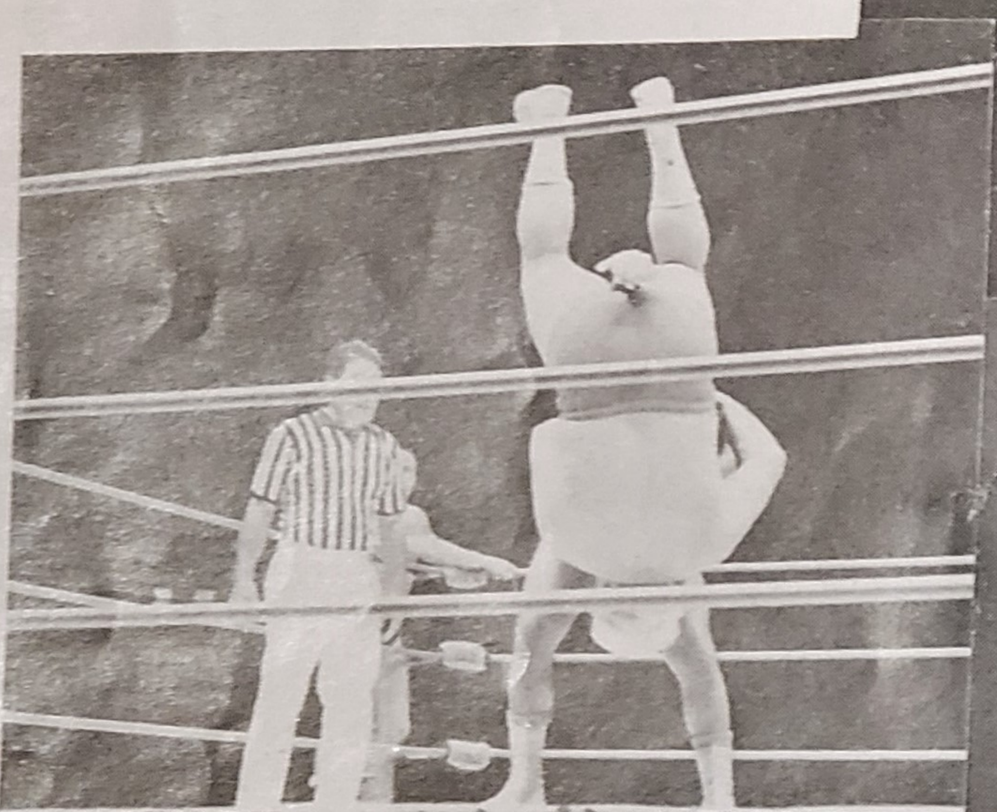


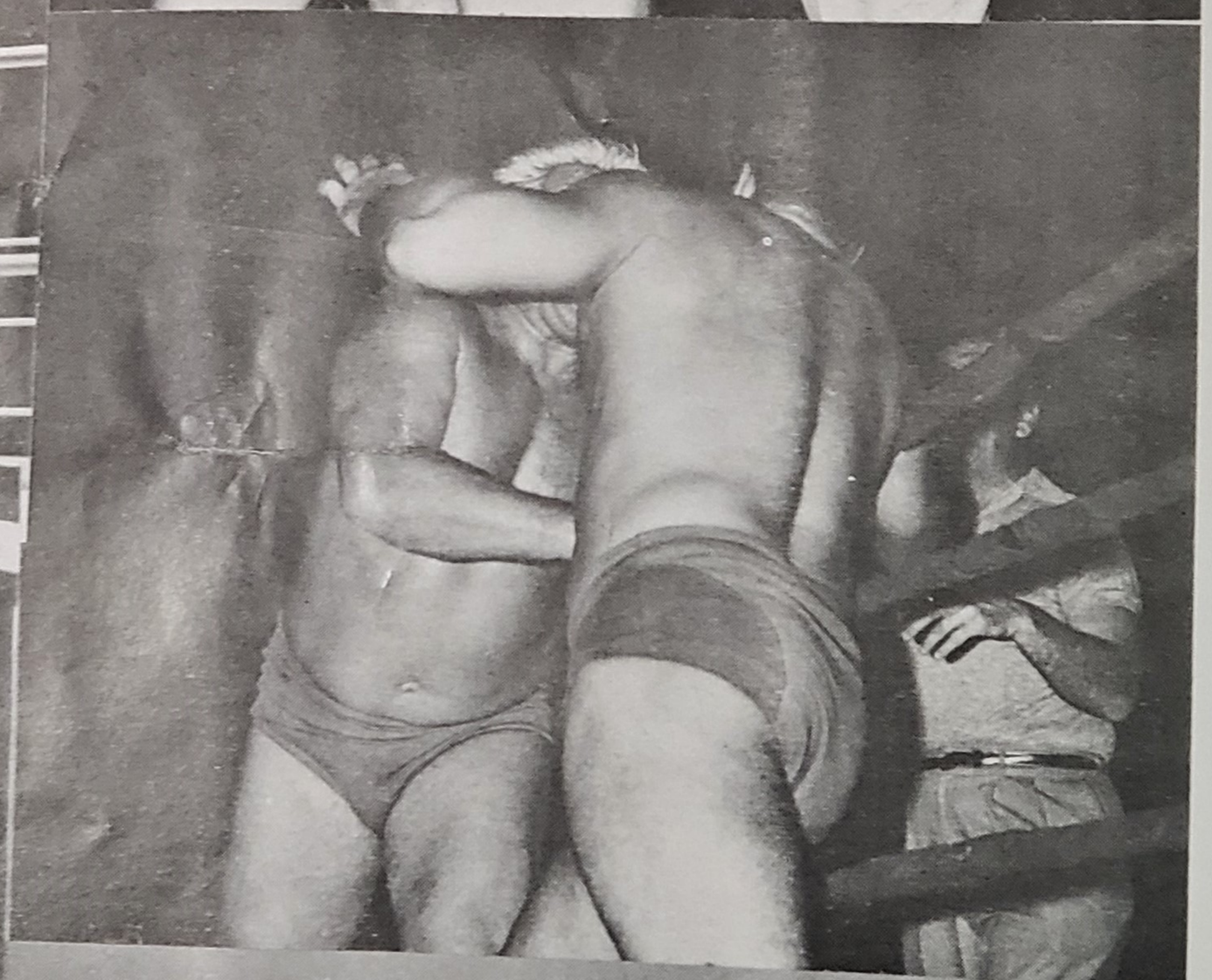
A Collector's Item

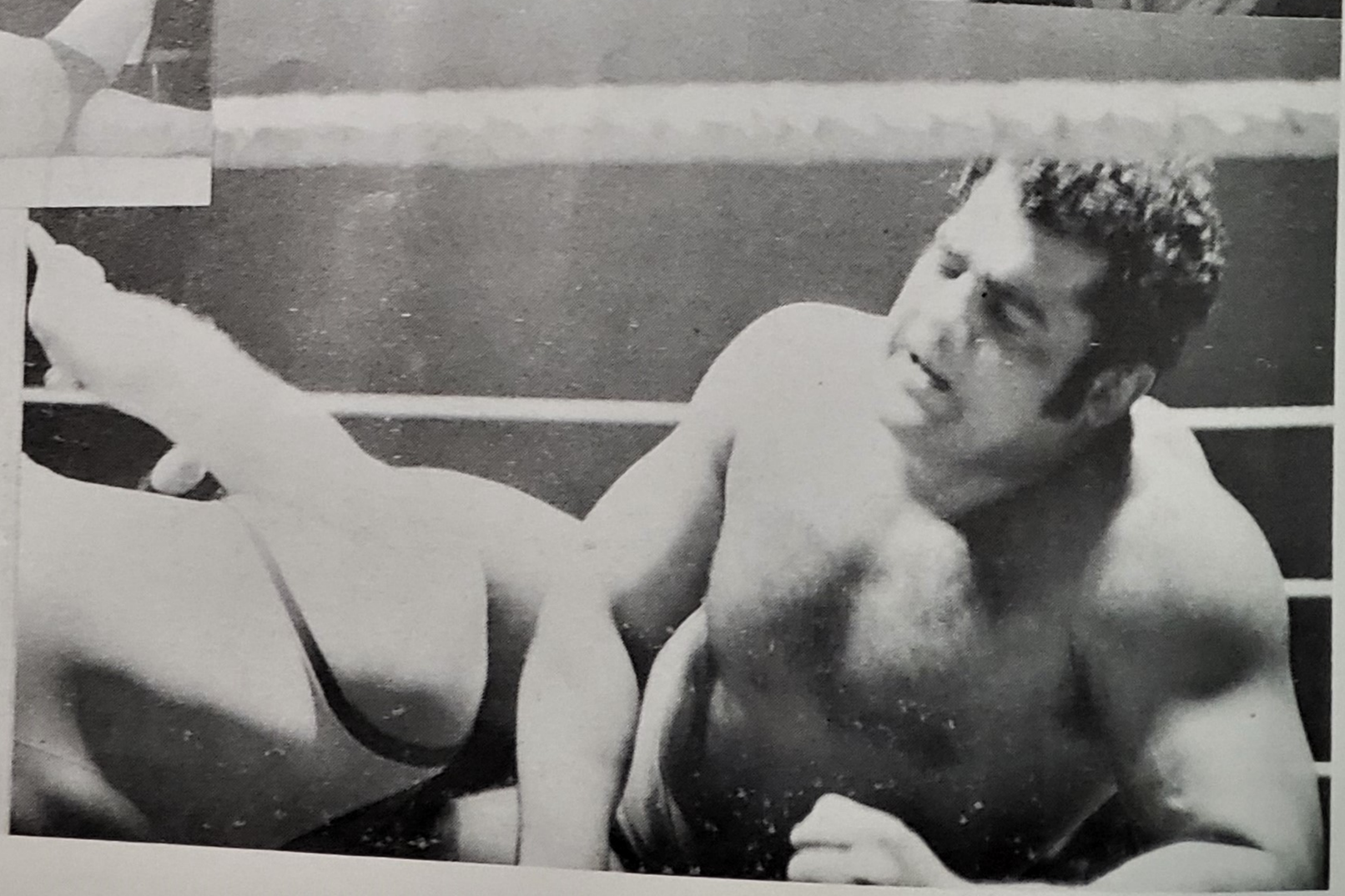
Para los Coleccionistas







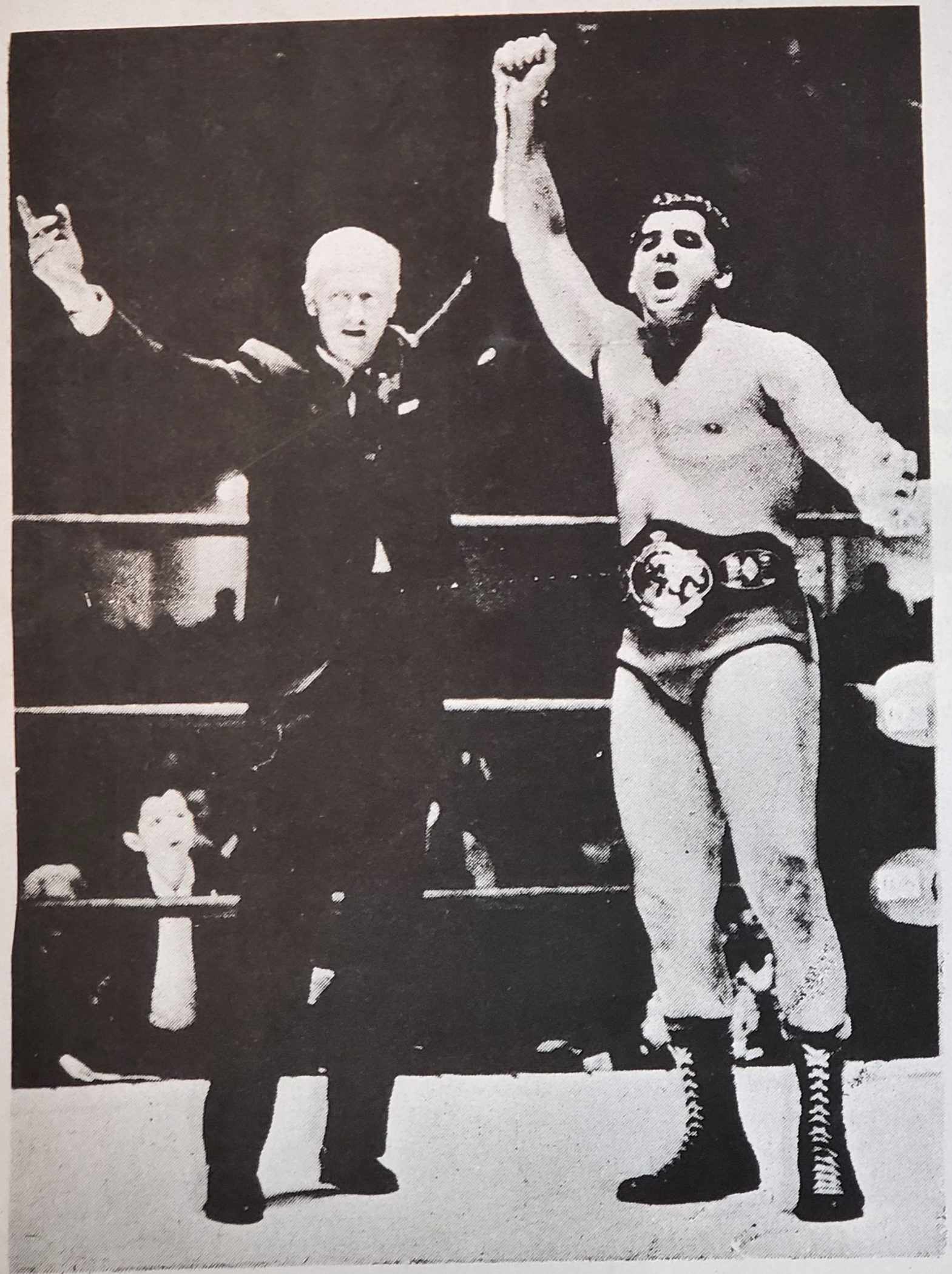




VIVA PEDRO

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Pedro was only twenty-two years old when he gained his first title. Jimmy Lennon announces to the world that Morales is W.W.A. champion after a terrific struggle against the Destroyer in Los Angeles, Calif.



In the long and glorious history of professional wrestling there have been many idols of the fans who have risen and fallen; however, few have attained as high a position as has the present world wide wrestling federation heavyweight champion, Pedro Morales.

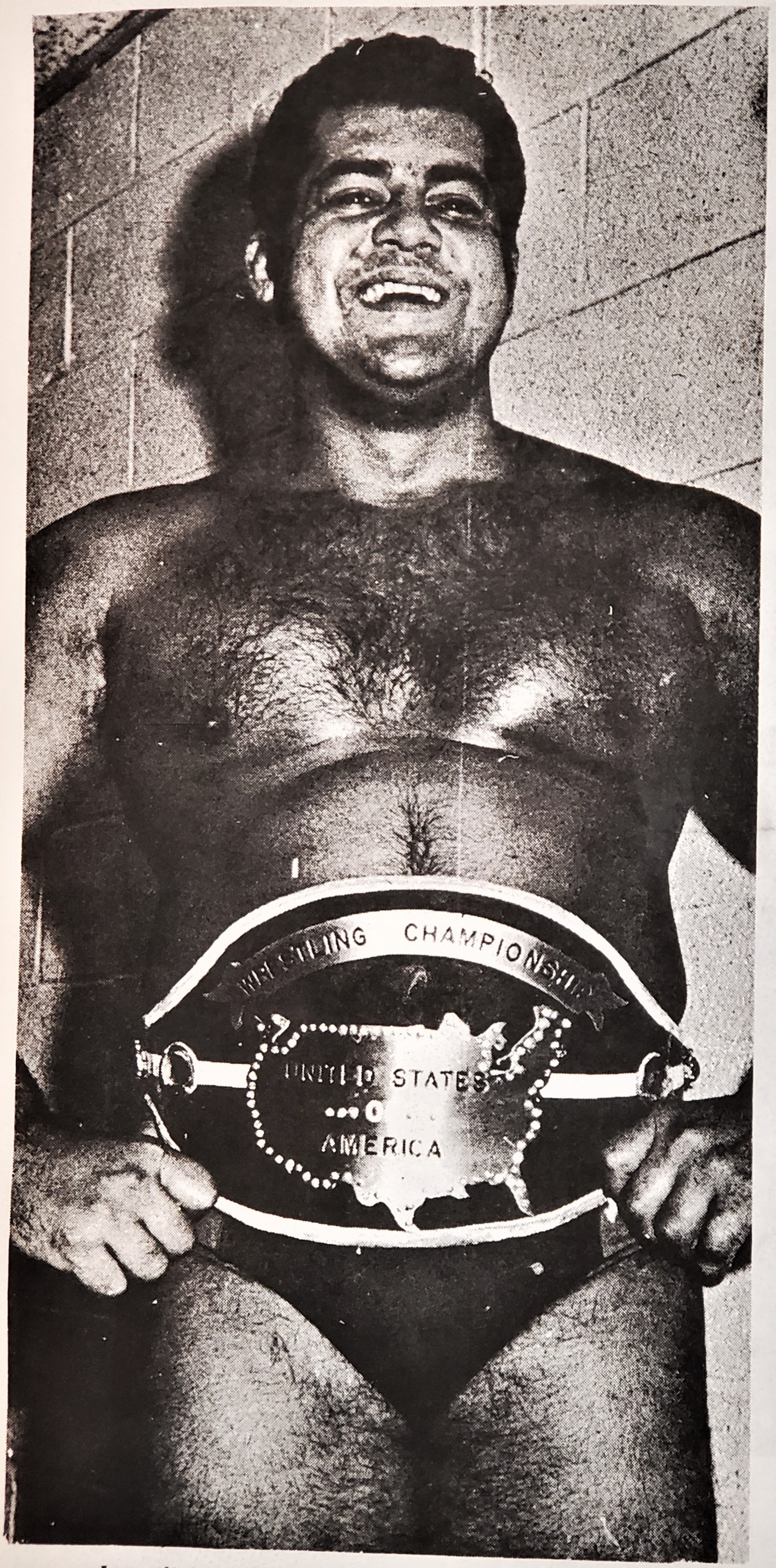
The dark handsome Puerto Rican star who has ruled the roost for the past three years is one of the most versatile grapplers not only in action today but in the last dozen years.

Morales combines strength, skill and acrobatics along with courage to an unbeatable degree. The first Puerto Rican to win a world title, it was obvious from the time he was a youngster that Morales would achieve a high place in life as he had the determination and guts that are needed to reach the top.

Morales was born on October 22, 1942, on the small island of Culebra, off the coast of Puerto Rico. Like most youngsters growing up in Puerto Rico, his first sport was baseball—in fact, his earliest dreams were of being a professional baseball player, and there is little doubt that he would have made a fine one, as he was a star on the sandlots and in school. One of Pedro's older brothers and a cousin of his were pro ball players.

However, by the time he was fifteen and living in New York City, he had made up his mind that it was to be in the sport of wrestling that he was going to be a star.

Morales joined one of the many clubs in New York where youngsters wrestled; big for his age, he scaled one hundred eighty five and already was filling out with



A smiling Pedro proudly displays his North American Championship belt.

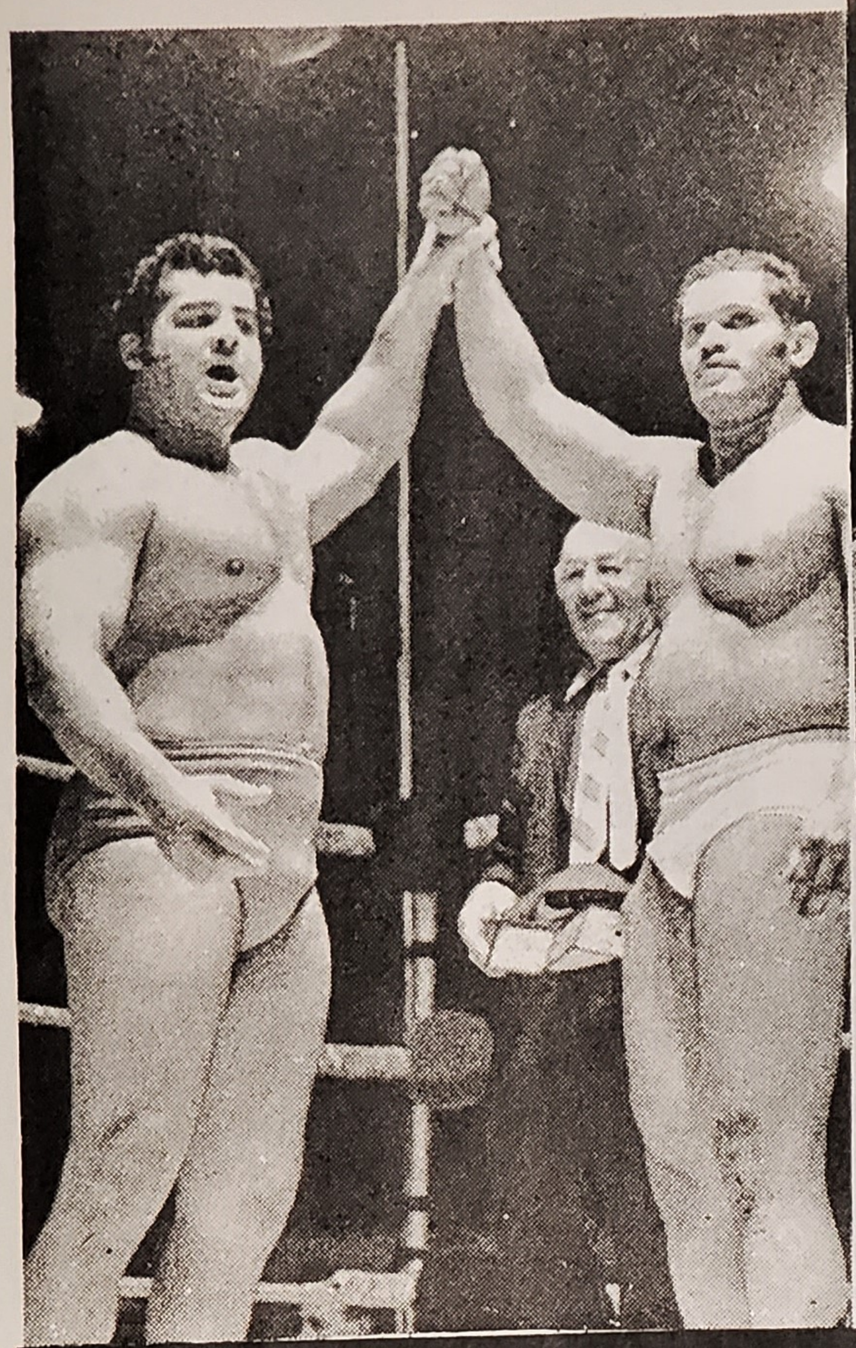
the large shoulders and massive chest. One day, while working out in the gym, he was spotted by the famous old–time star Kola Kwariani, who was then managing Antonio Rocca. Kola was impressed by what he saw in Morales and spoke to him about turning pro.

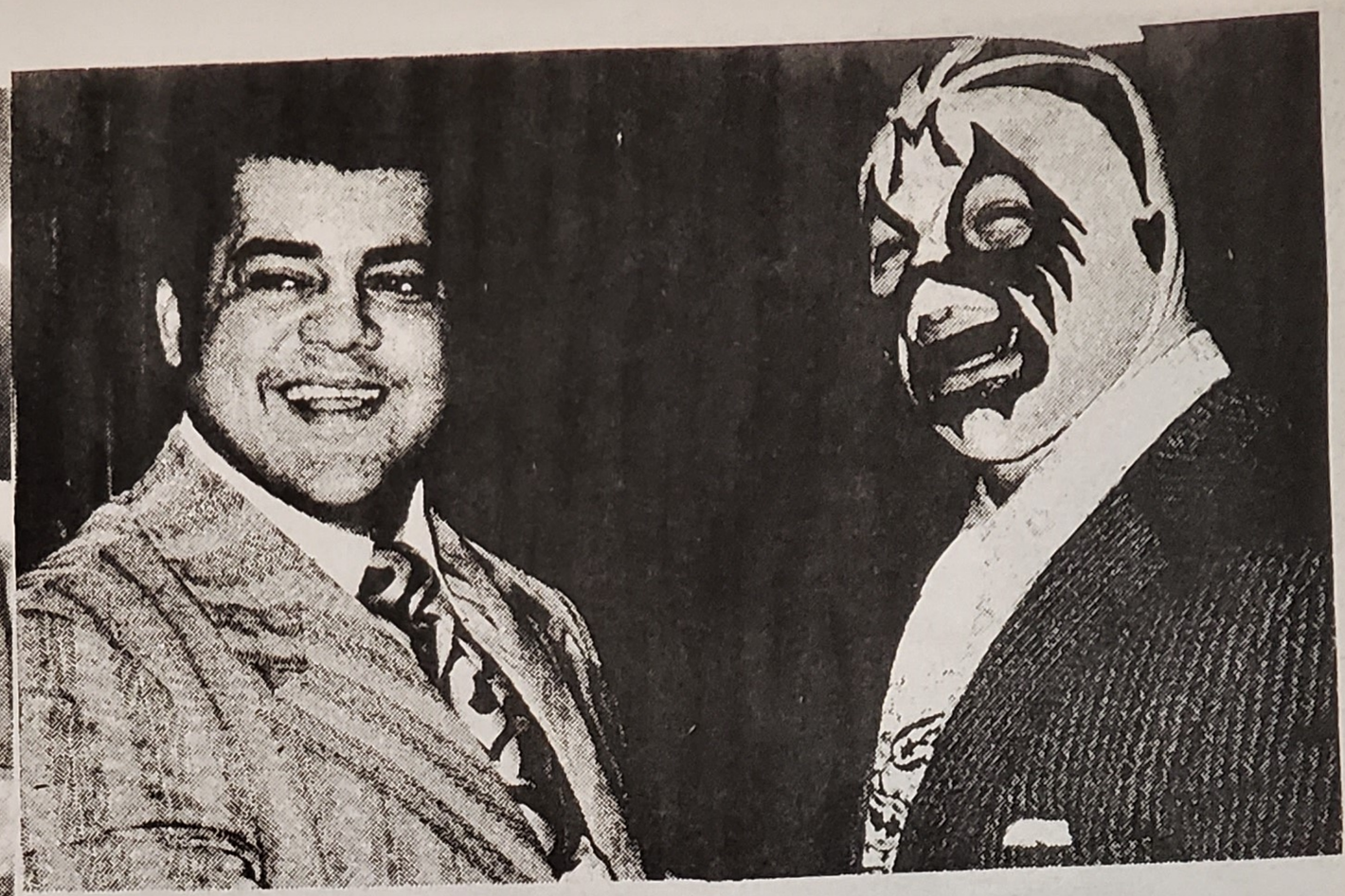
Morales said yes, but didn't tell Kola his age, which at the time was just past sixteen. When it came time for Pedro to obtain a license from the New York State Athletic Commission, there were many problems, but, finally, after Pedro's father pleaded with the commission, they allowed Pedro to be licensed, and his professional career was launched.

Morales' first match took place in Sunnyside Gardens, in Long Island City, on November 11, 1958; he defeated Buddy Gilbert in a little over two minutes. For the next three years, Morales wrestled up and down the east coast, winning the vast majority of his matches and learning all the time, while also growing taller and heavier. In 1962, Morales travelled to other parts of the United States and began to establish himself as a future star.

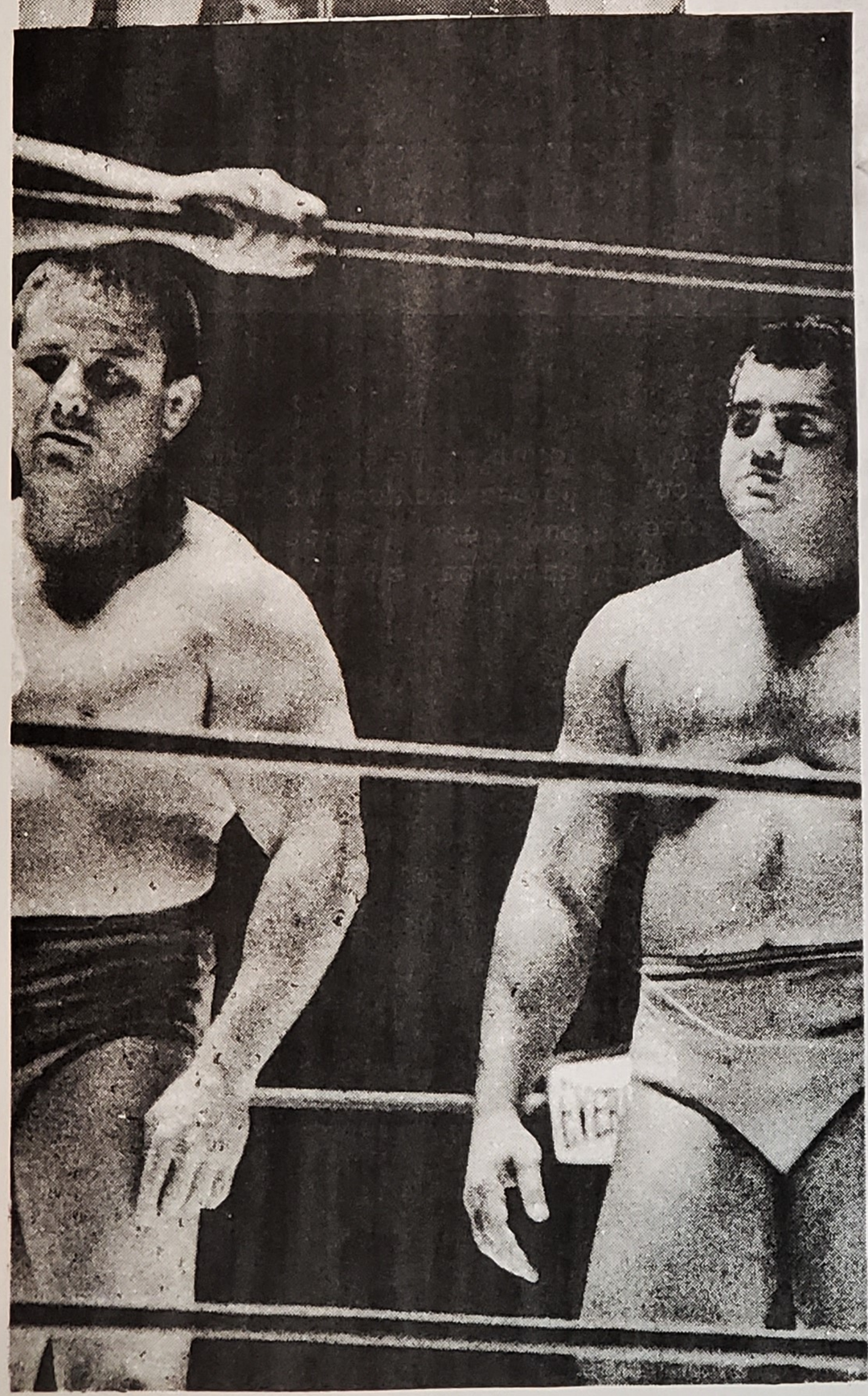
He returned to New York in 1963 and was on the card in the old Madison Square Garden on May 17, 1963 when his idol and friend Bruno Sammartino defeated Buddy Rogers to capture the W.W.W.F. championship. Pedro had whipped Willie Bath in ten minutes that night. Morales was just as happy as Sammartino; it was almost as if he had won the crown himself.

Pedro continued to wrestle around the east for the remainder of the year, but in 1964 crossed over to the west coast, where in a few short years he was to become the top draw at the box office. The vocal and excitable Mexican fans took the Puerto Rican to their hearts. Morales at age twenty-two in early 1965 captured the W.W.A. championship, which he held for many years. In 1967, Morales went on his first world tour, wrestling in Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Fuji and Korea. He returned





Pedro with four of the men he tag-teamed with during his west coast years. (clockwise) Pepper Gomez, Victor Rivera, Mil Mascaras and Ed Francis.

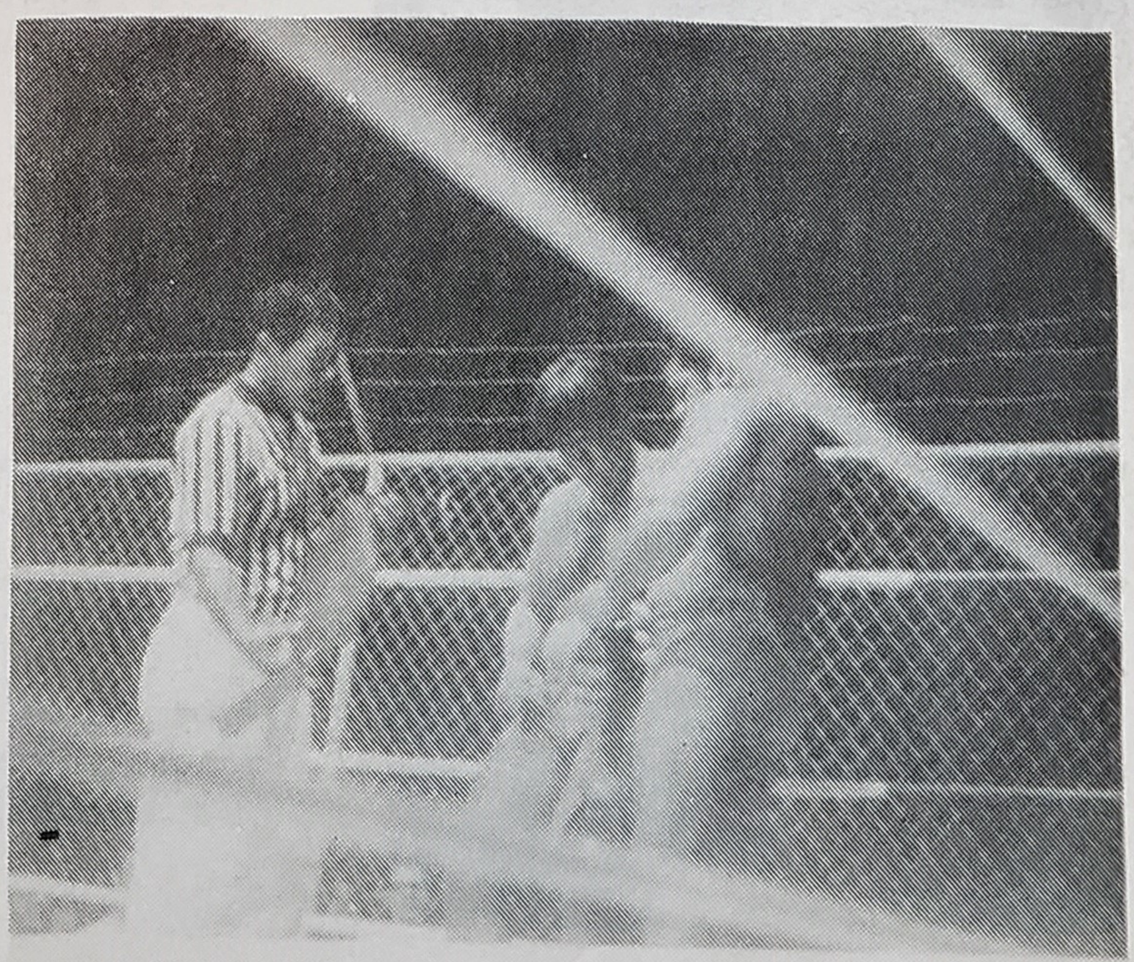


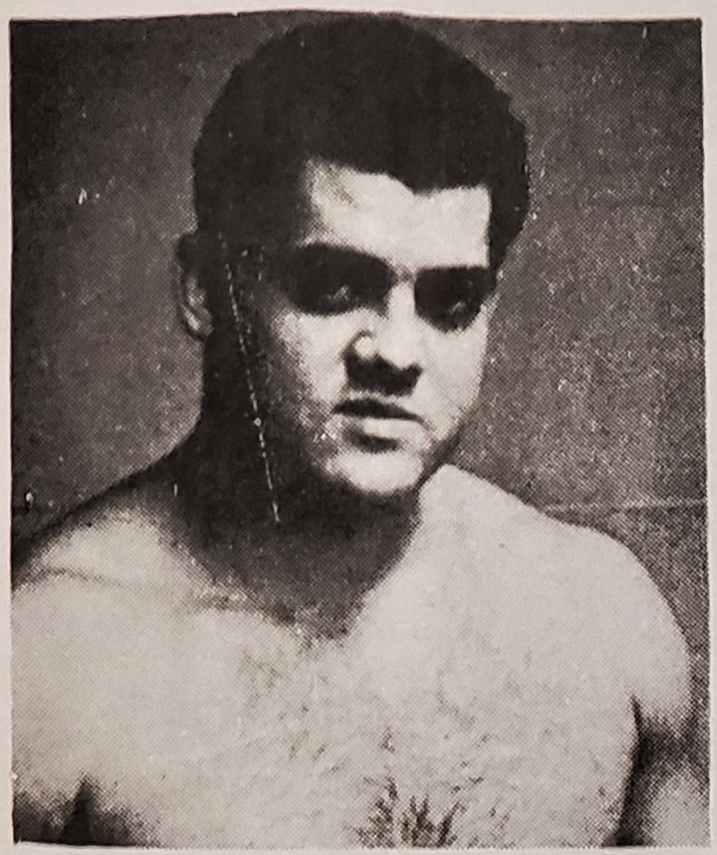
to California and then travelled to Mexico and Hawaii, where he quickly established himself among the top stars.

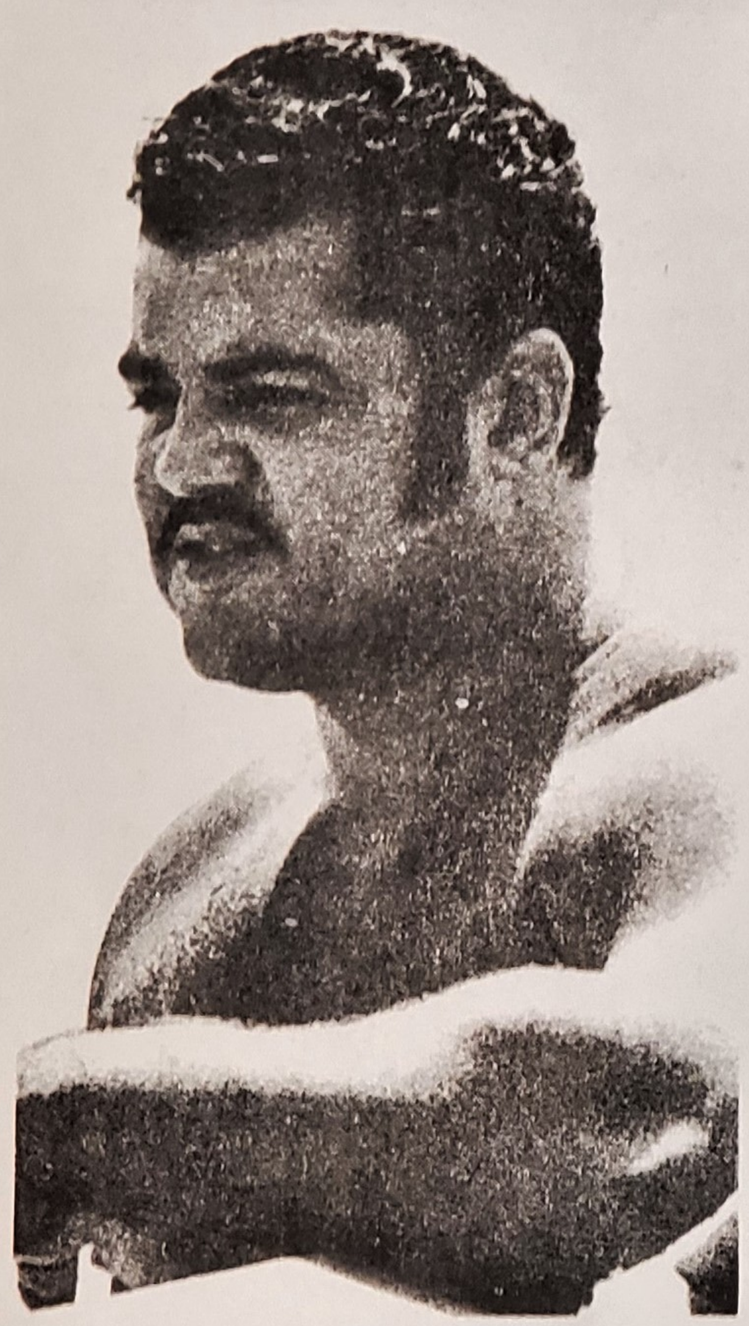
Among those who failed to topple Morales during his years as W.W.A. titleholder were such stars as Ray Stevens, The Sheik, Pat Patterson, Buddy "Killer" Austin, Fred Blassie, Gorilla Monsoon, The Hangman, El Mongol and The Destroyer.

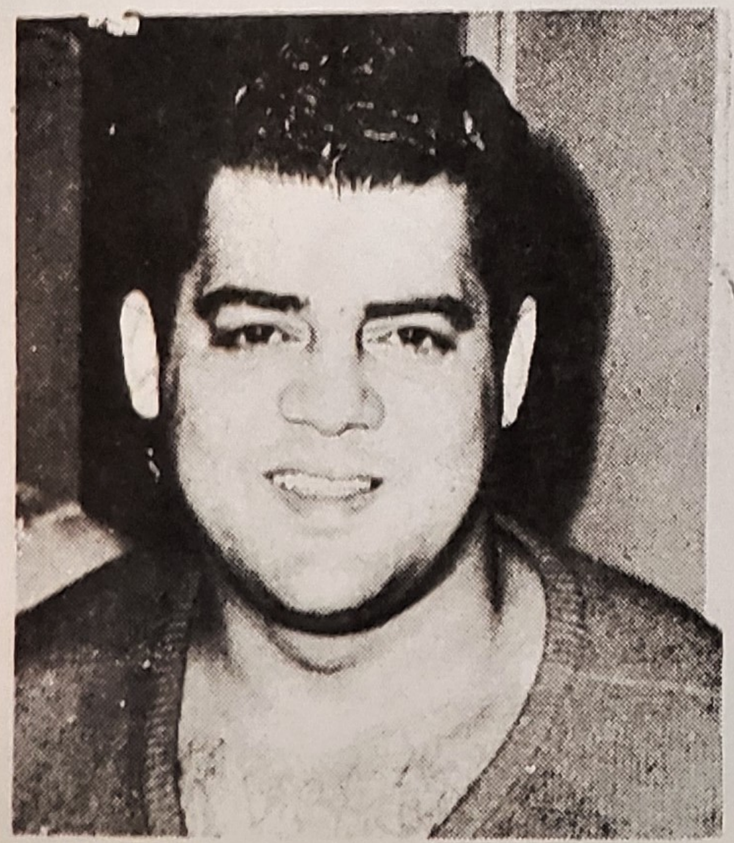
While in Hawaii and California, Morales teamed with three different men to capture Tag-Team titles—Victor Rivera, Pepper Gomez and Ed Francis. Morales and Rivera lost their belt when they left California for a tour of the Orient.

Just before leaving California in 1970, Morales teamed with the popular Mexican masked idol Mil Mascaras and it appeared as if







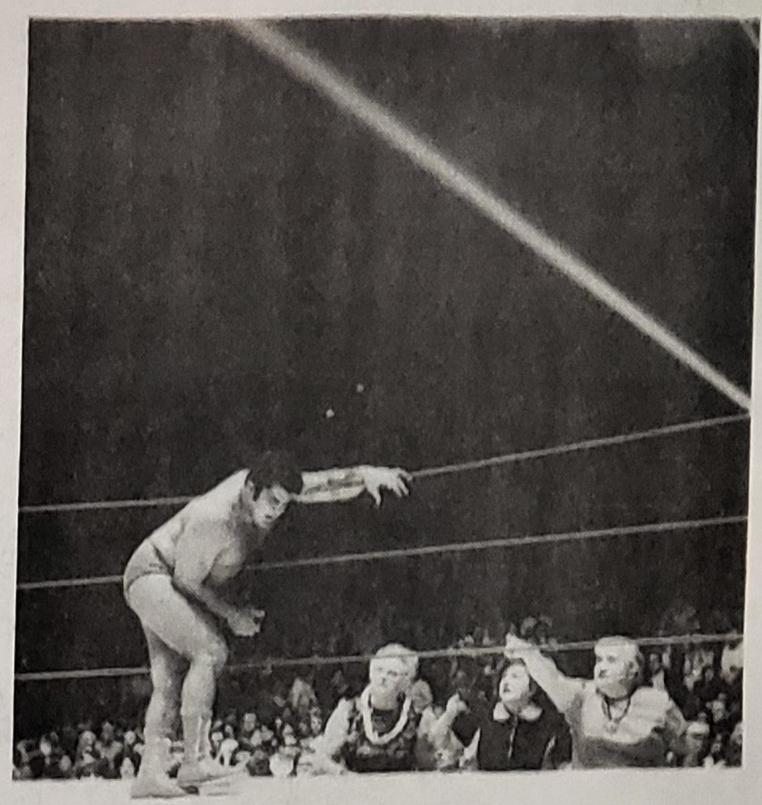


they would be a shoo-in to capture Pedro's fourth tag-team belt, but Morales decided to return to his home in New York City. It was a combination of homesickness and a big offer from promoter Vince McMahon that returned him to the east coast.

Morales made his first showing in the new Madison Square Garden on January 18,1971, when he defeated the Wolfman in just over five minutes.

Dressing in a hurry, he went back to ringside to watch his old idol and friend Bruno Sammartino defend his title against the powerful Russian giant Ivan Koloff. Pedro was as stunned as the rest of the crowd when Koloff ended the eight-year reign of Sammartino.

With tears in his eyes, Morales begged W.W.W.F. President Willie Gilzenberg to give him a chance at Koloff to avenge his idol. Koloff, having never seen Morales in action, and having little regard for what he called "West Coast" wrestlers, was only too happy and they squared off in the same ring on February 8, 1971, three weeks later. It was the biggest mistake of Koloff's life. The speed and agility of Morales were too much for the powerful Koloff; he was never able to trap Pedro, who dazzled him with footwork and after ten minutes and forty-one seconds removed the crown from his bald head.



"Go get 'em" Morales receives some support and advice from female fans.

Since then Morales has been unbeatable; he has turned back challenge after challenge. Only once has he failed to defeat a rival and that was in the "Match of the Century" when he and Sammartino clashed before over 22,000 fans in Shea Stadium; only a day-long drizzle held the crowd from topping 30,000, as many fans from out of town, afraid that the match would be rained out, did not attend.

After one hour and fifteen minutes of fantastic grappling, with the tide of battle surging back and forth many times, the eleven o'clock curfew ended the match.

That contest took place on September 30, 1972 and since then many more challengers have fallen by the wayside.

Today, at age thirty-one, Morales is at his peak and who is there to say that he will not surpass his idol Bruno's eight-year reign as champion? Certainly, there is no one on the horizon who appears to have the combination of skill and determination necessary to beat him.

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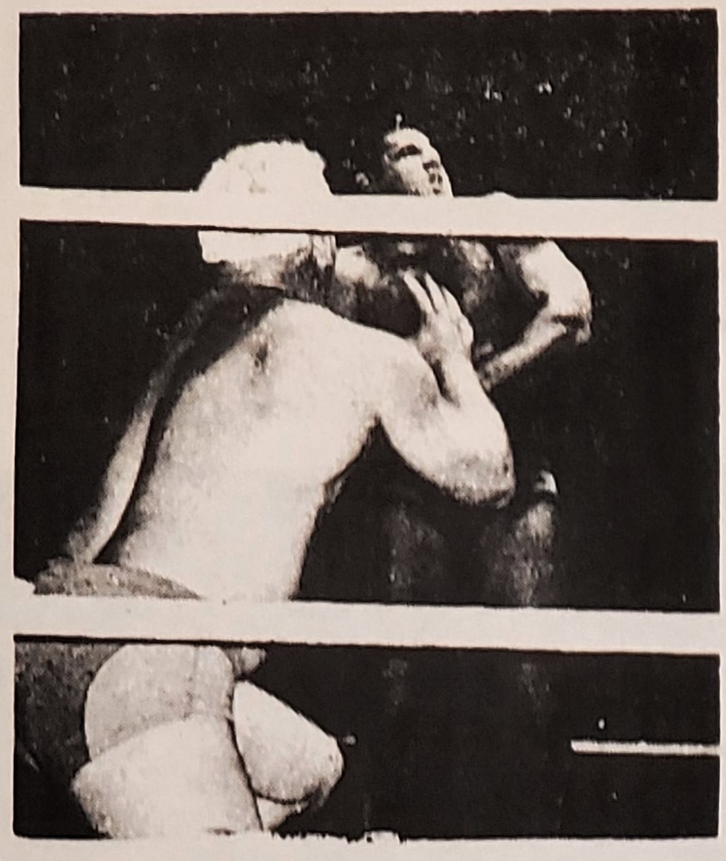
Three faces of Morales: very young; growing up; and, today, a mature champion.

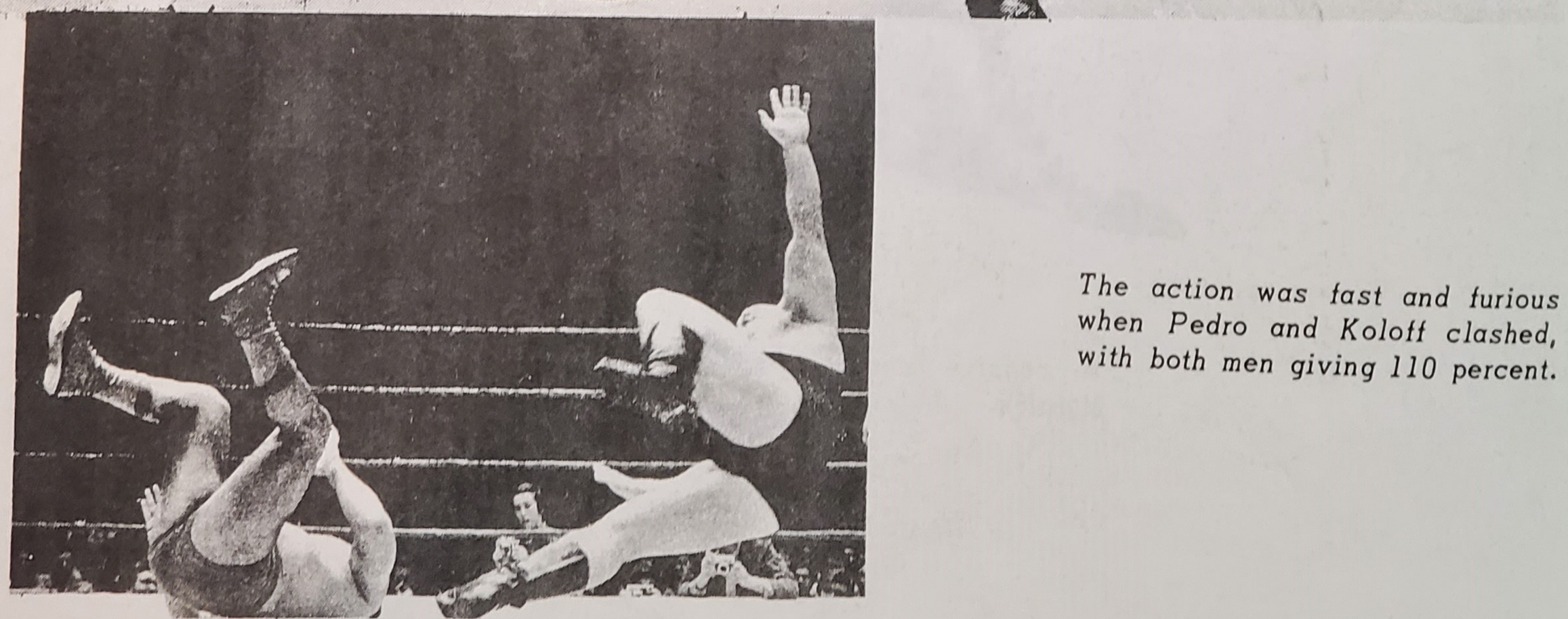


Buddy "Killer" Austin begs for mercy as Pedro puts the pressure on an arm-bar.

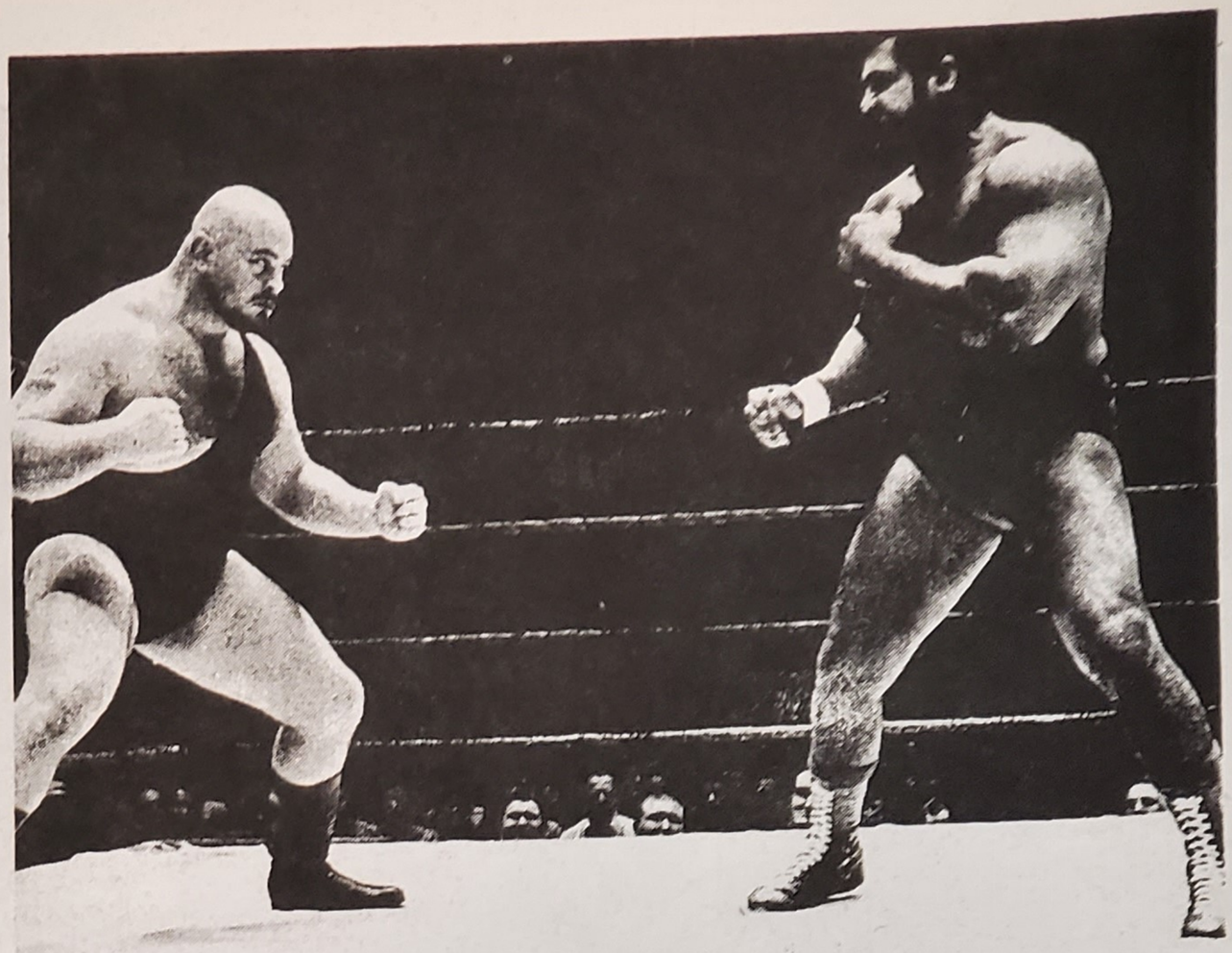
Still to reach his prime at age 32, Morales has a long future ahead of him and his aim is to some day defeat all of those who claim 'world' titles until he stands alone.

A pensive mood is struck by Morales.

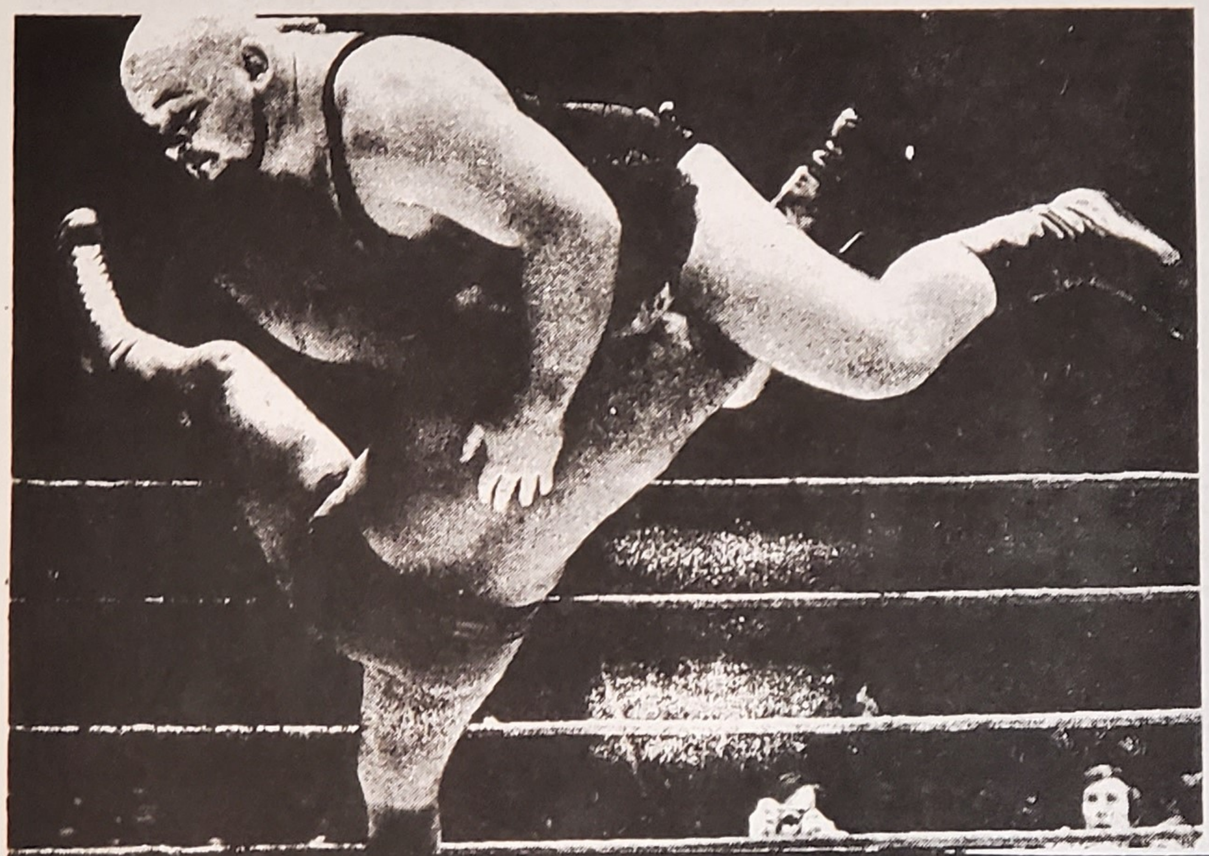
PEDRO WINS TITLE



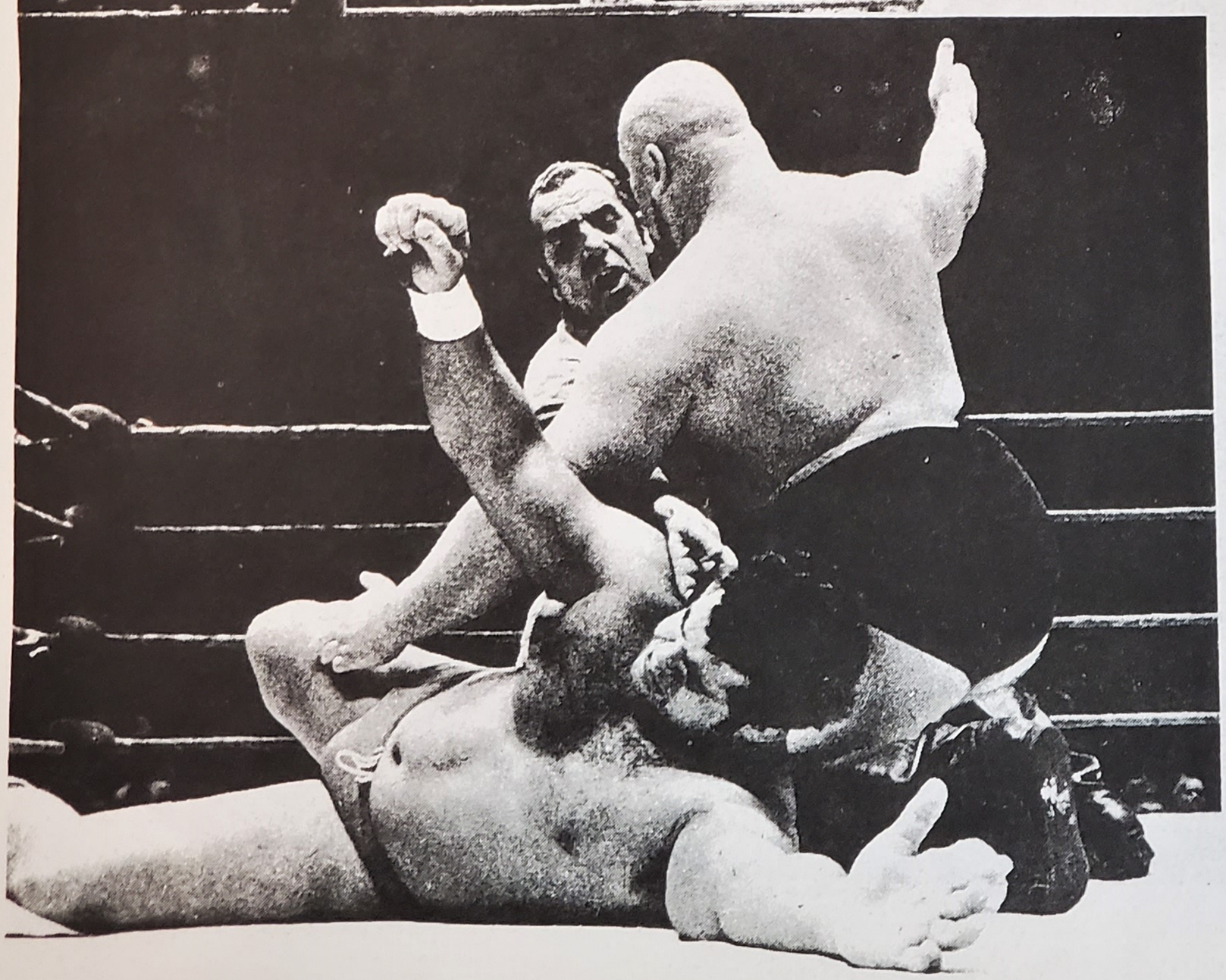
The action was fast and furious when Pedro and Koloff clashed, with both men giving 110 percent.



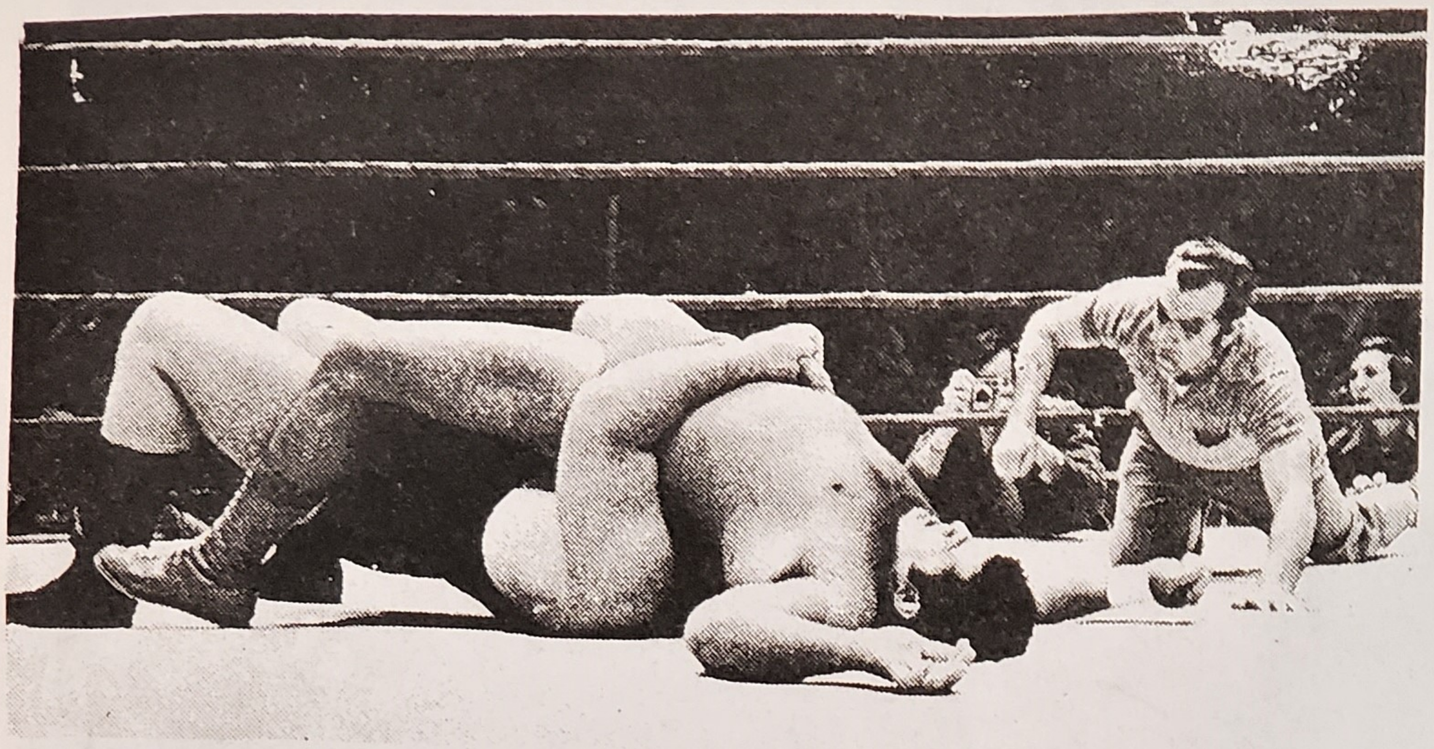
After a slow start the action came blazing hot. The match attracted a record crowd of 22,812 who paid $86,885.00.



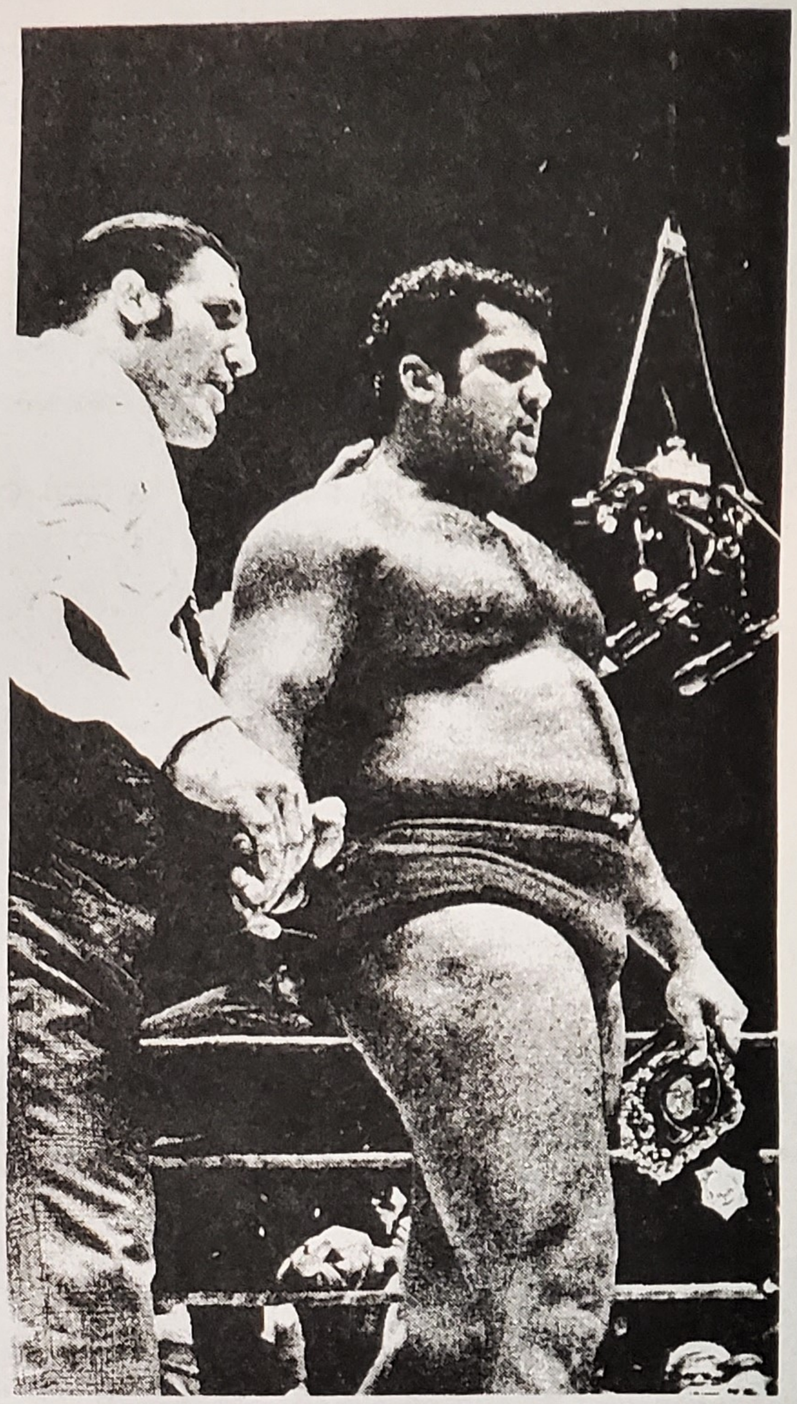
Pedro's attempt at a body slam went astray when Koloff's weight proved too much and he came close to pinning Pedro instead.

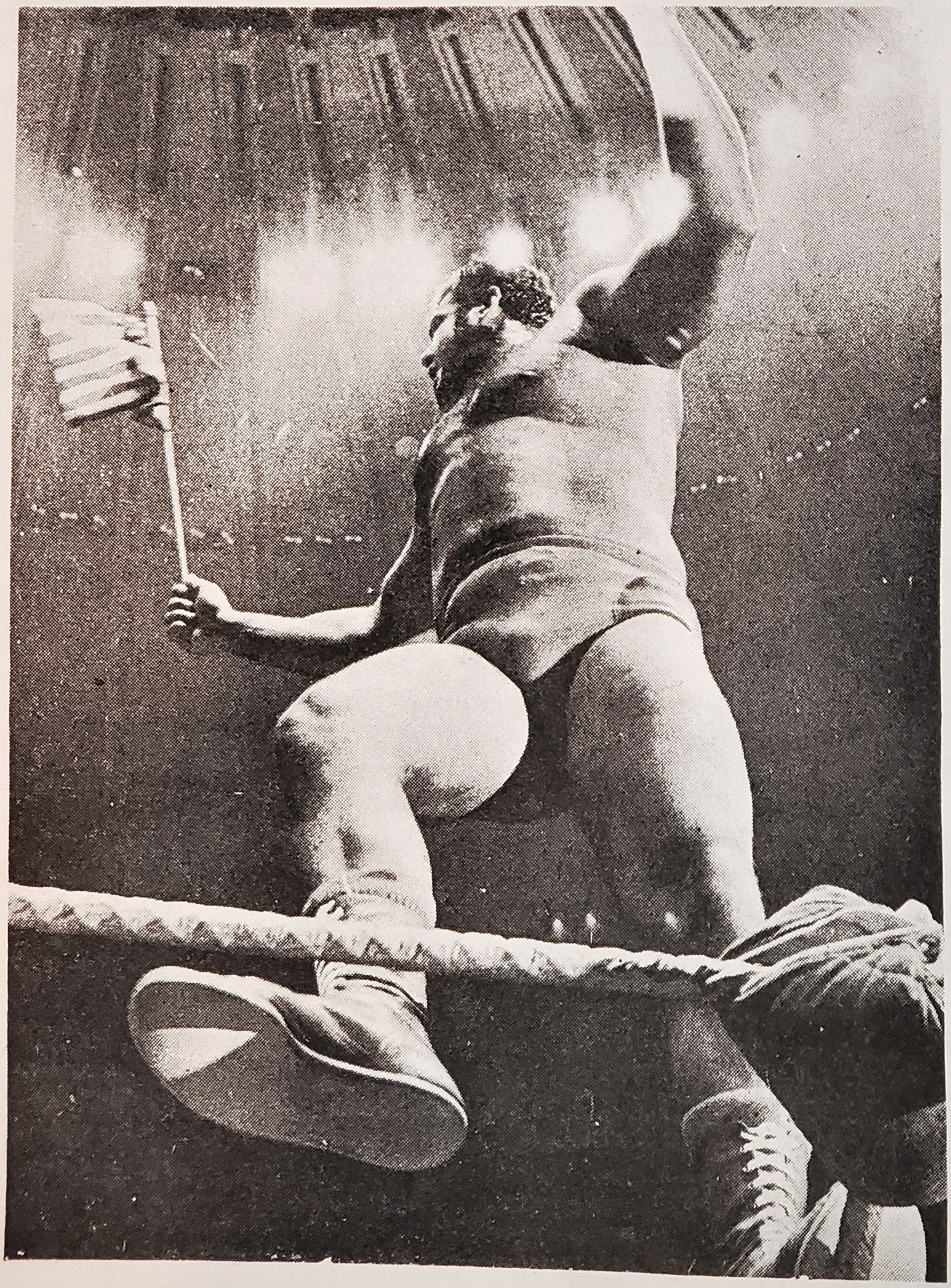


The referee had a difficult time in keeping Koloff from using illegal tactics in his efforts to hold on to his title.

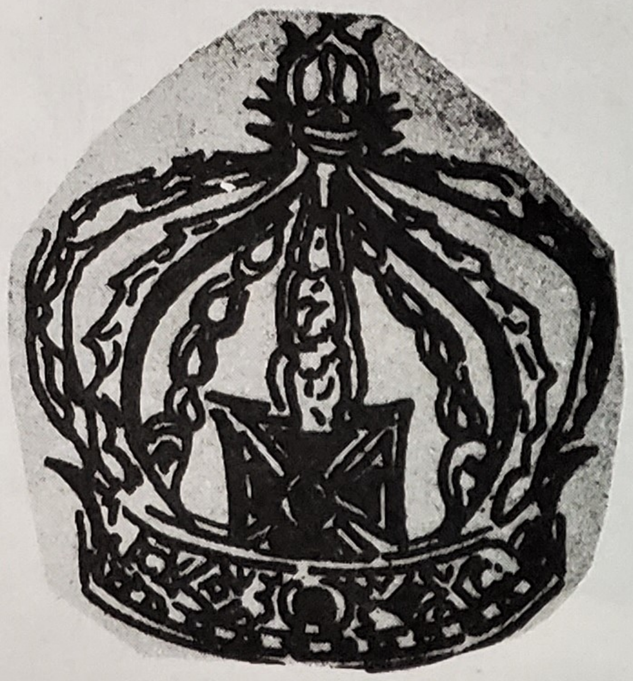


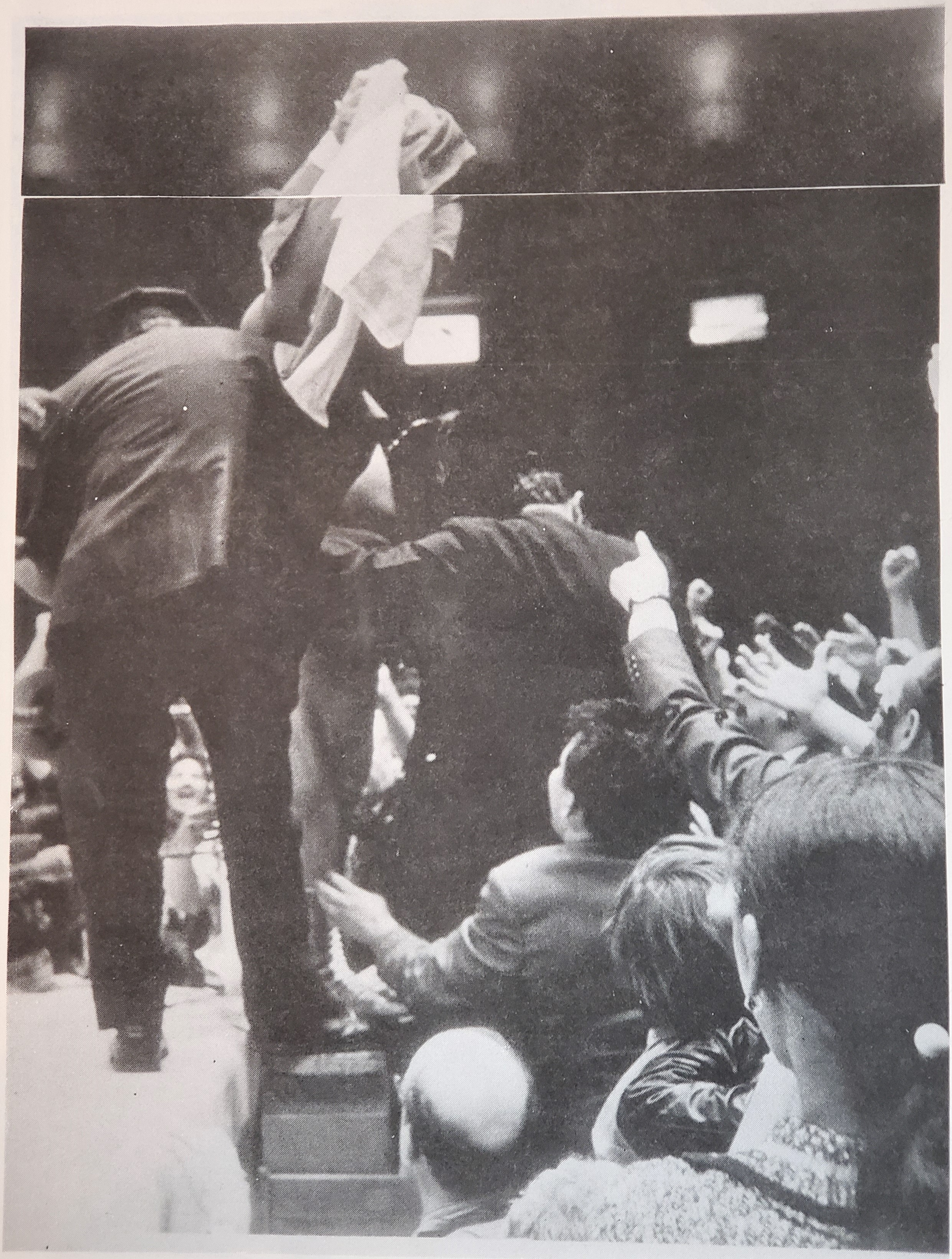
Koloff claimed that it was Pedro's shoulders, not his, that were on the mat at the count-out.





The crowd went wild at Pedro's victory; former champion Bruno Sammartino was the first to jump into the ring to congratulate Pedro (above). (left) Morales acknowledges the cheers of his admirers. (opposite page) The police had a hard time in holding back the fans who tried to enter the ring to join in the celebration.

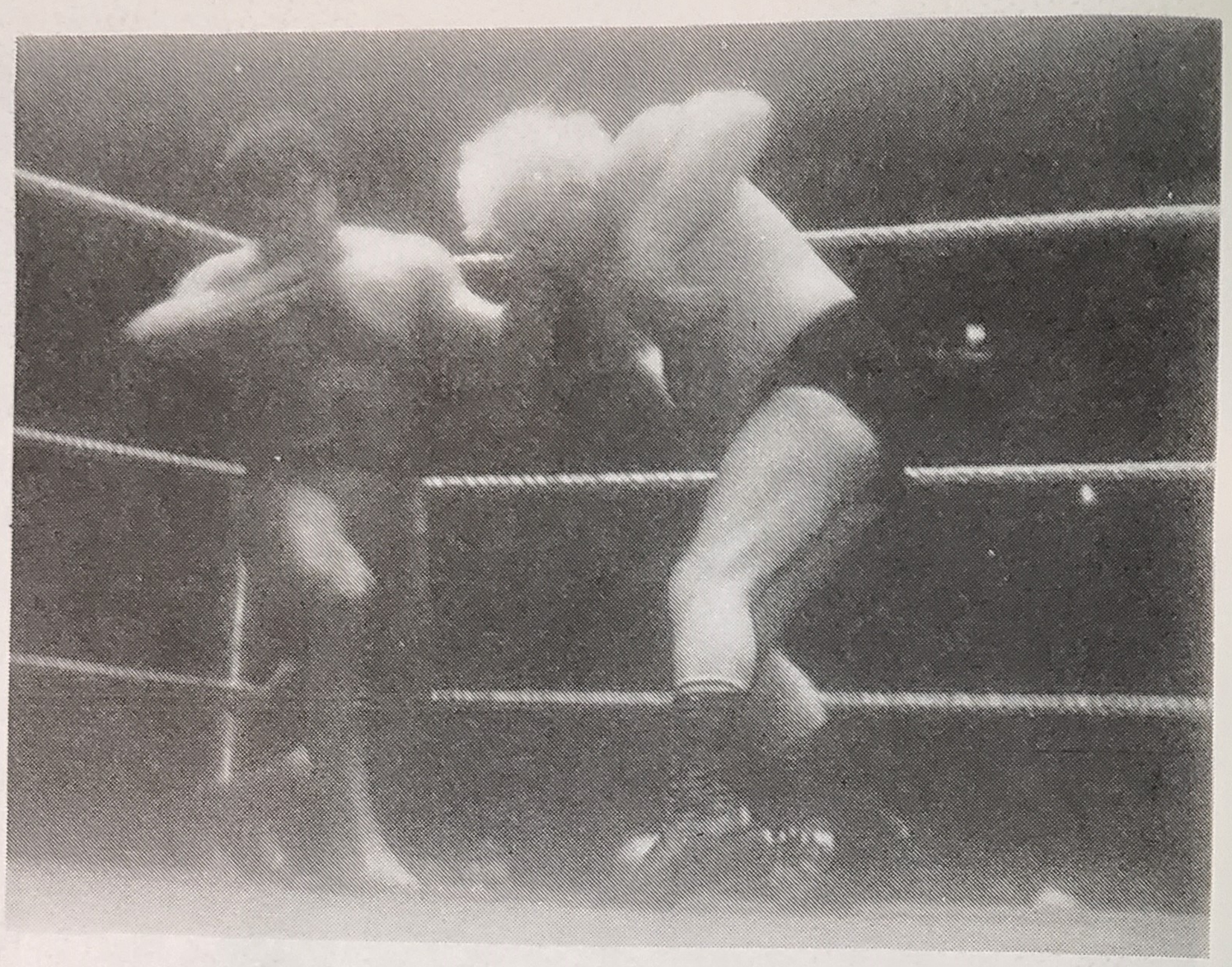




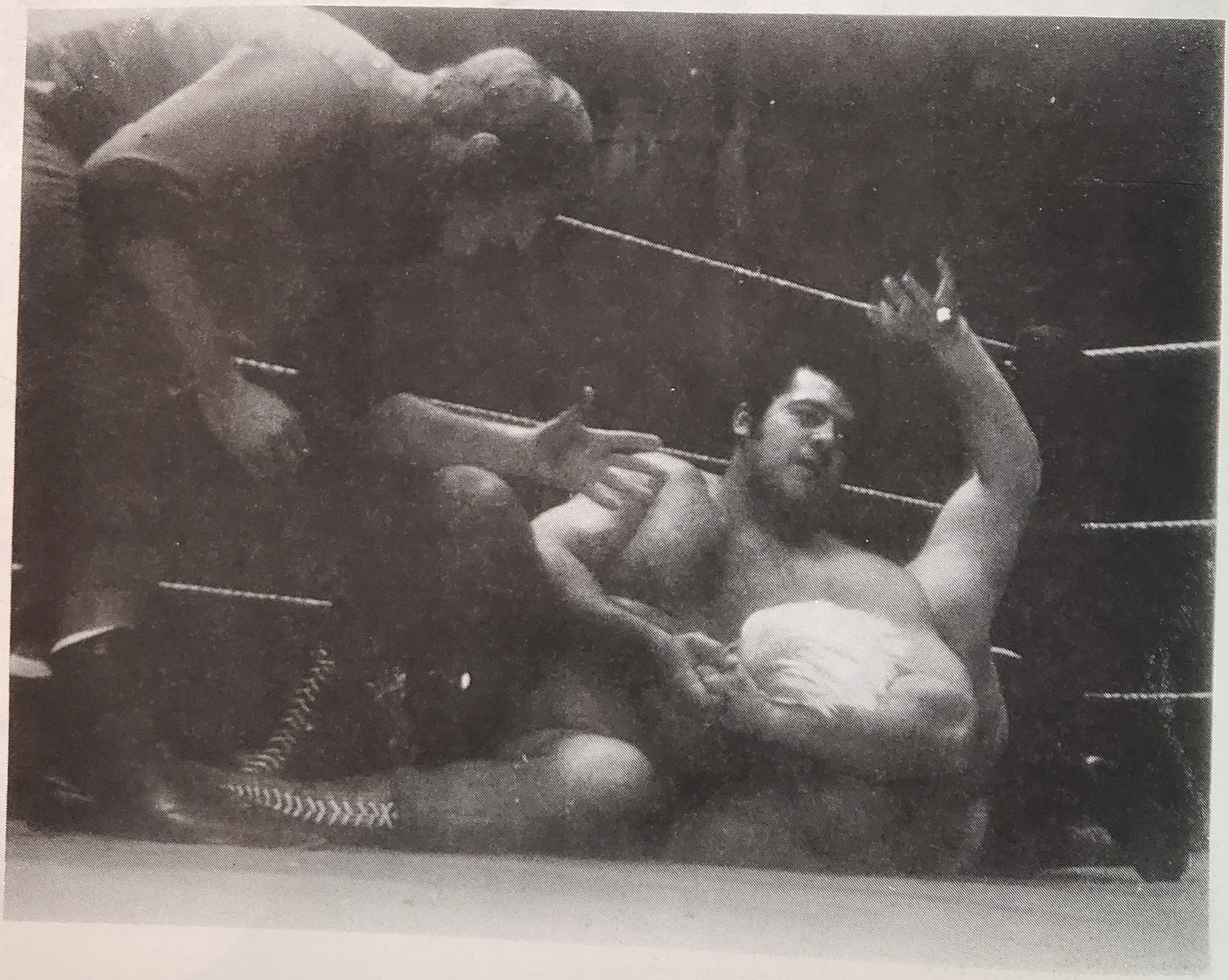
Pedro

vs

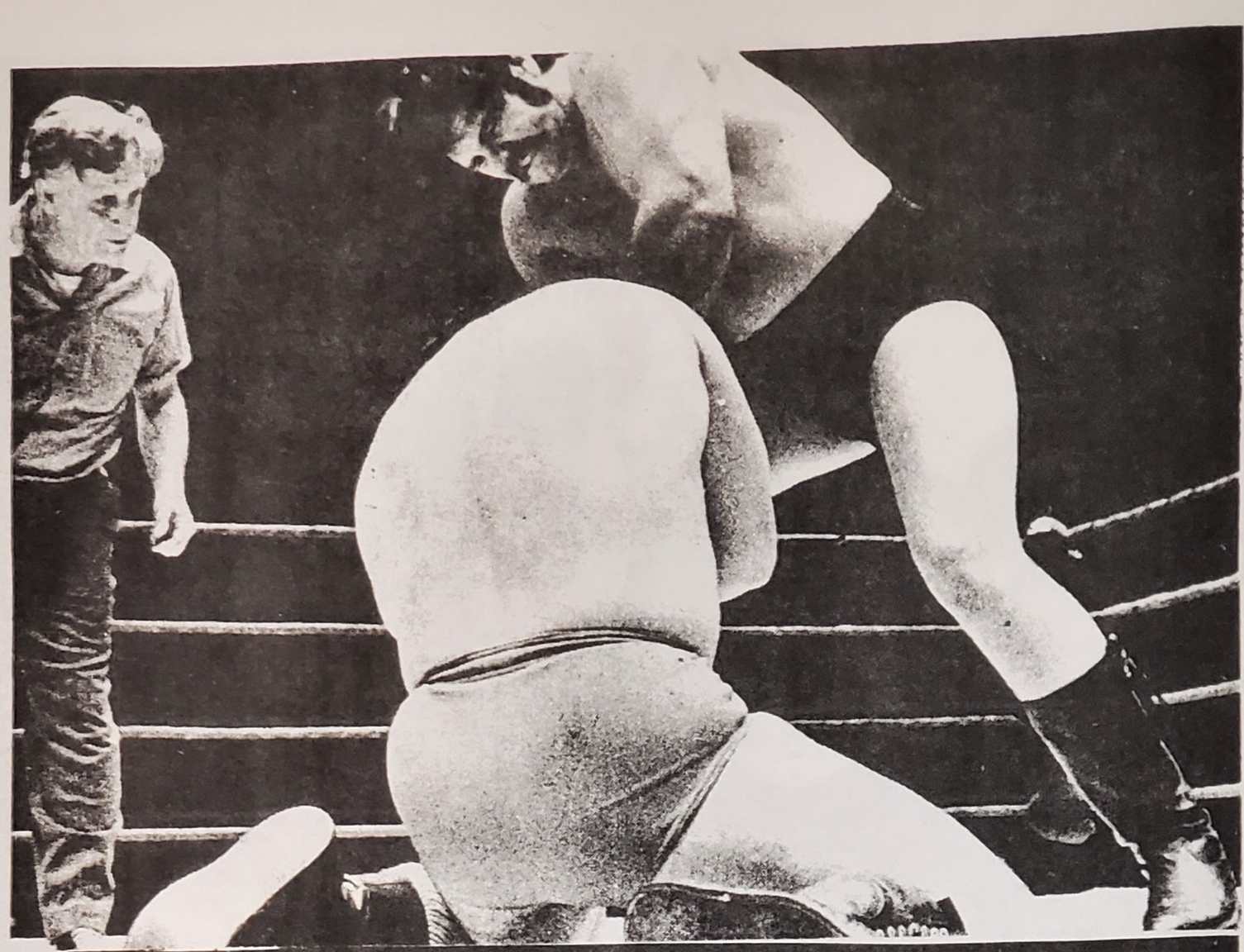
"Rip Collins"



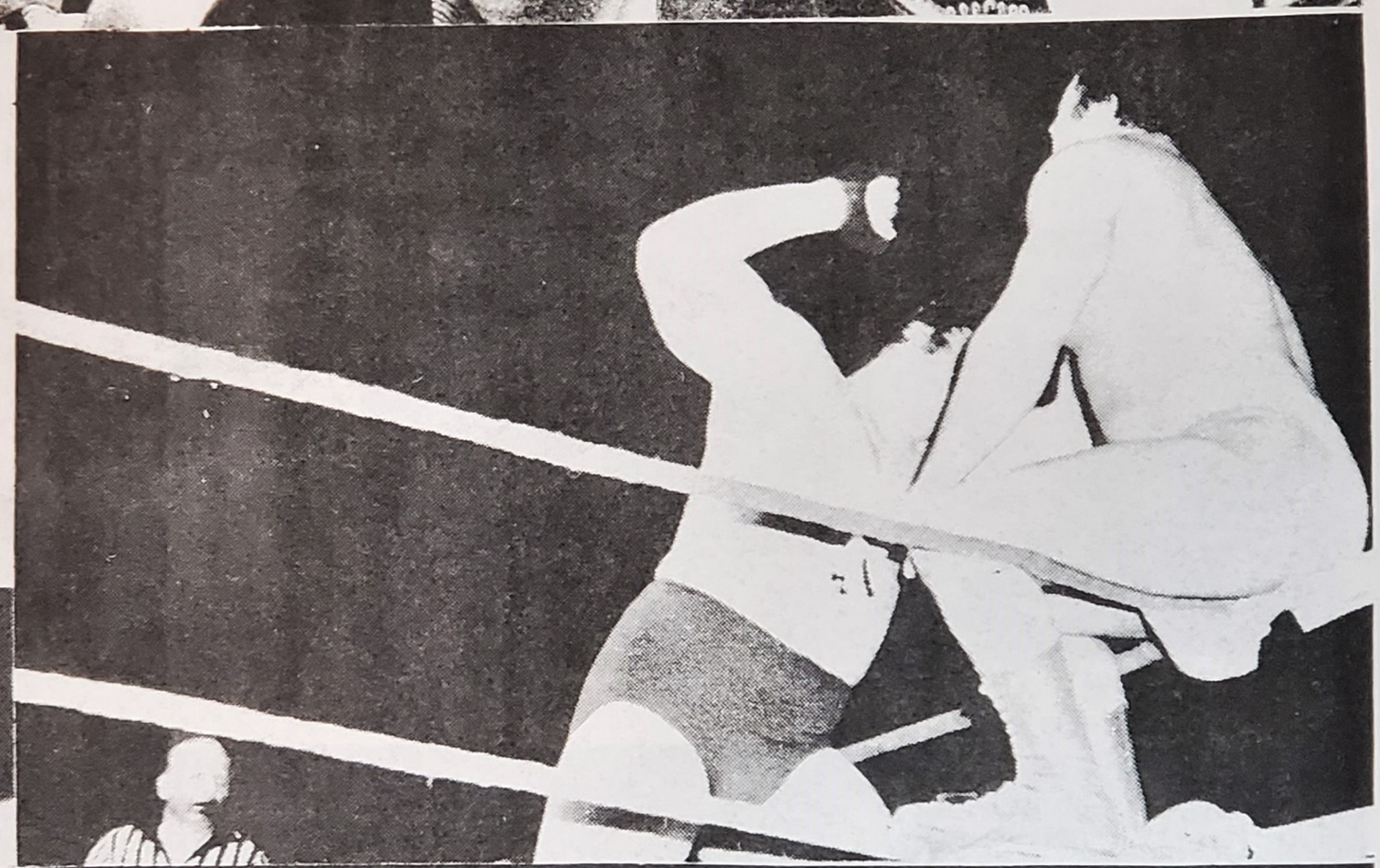
While in Hawaii Pedro had some memorable clashes with the Blond Terror Rip Collins. The Ripper used every dirty trick in the book, but Morales' skill always won out.

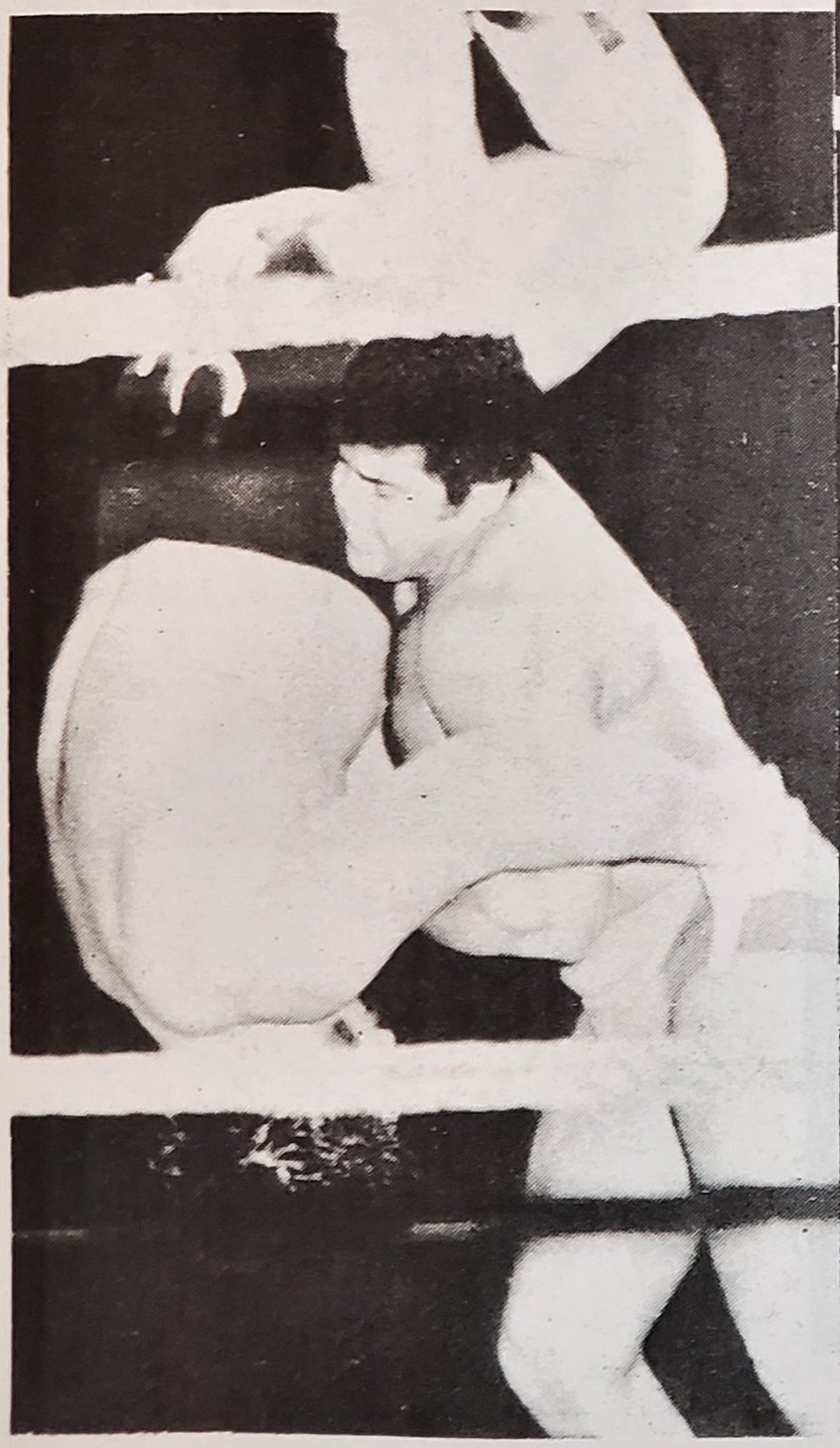


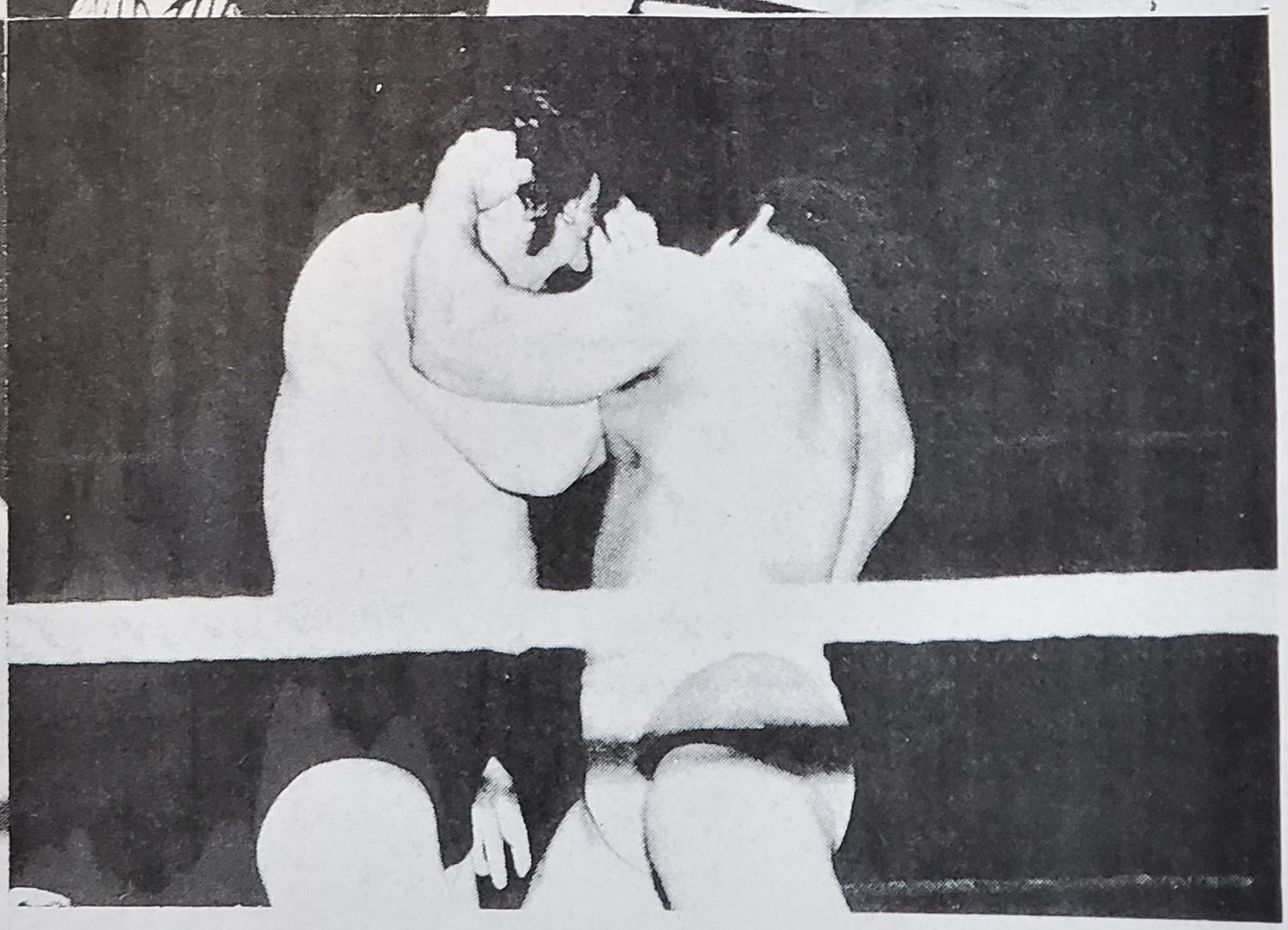
Pedro vs Black Jack Mulligan



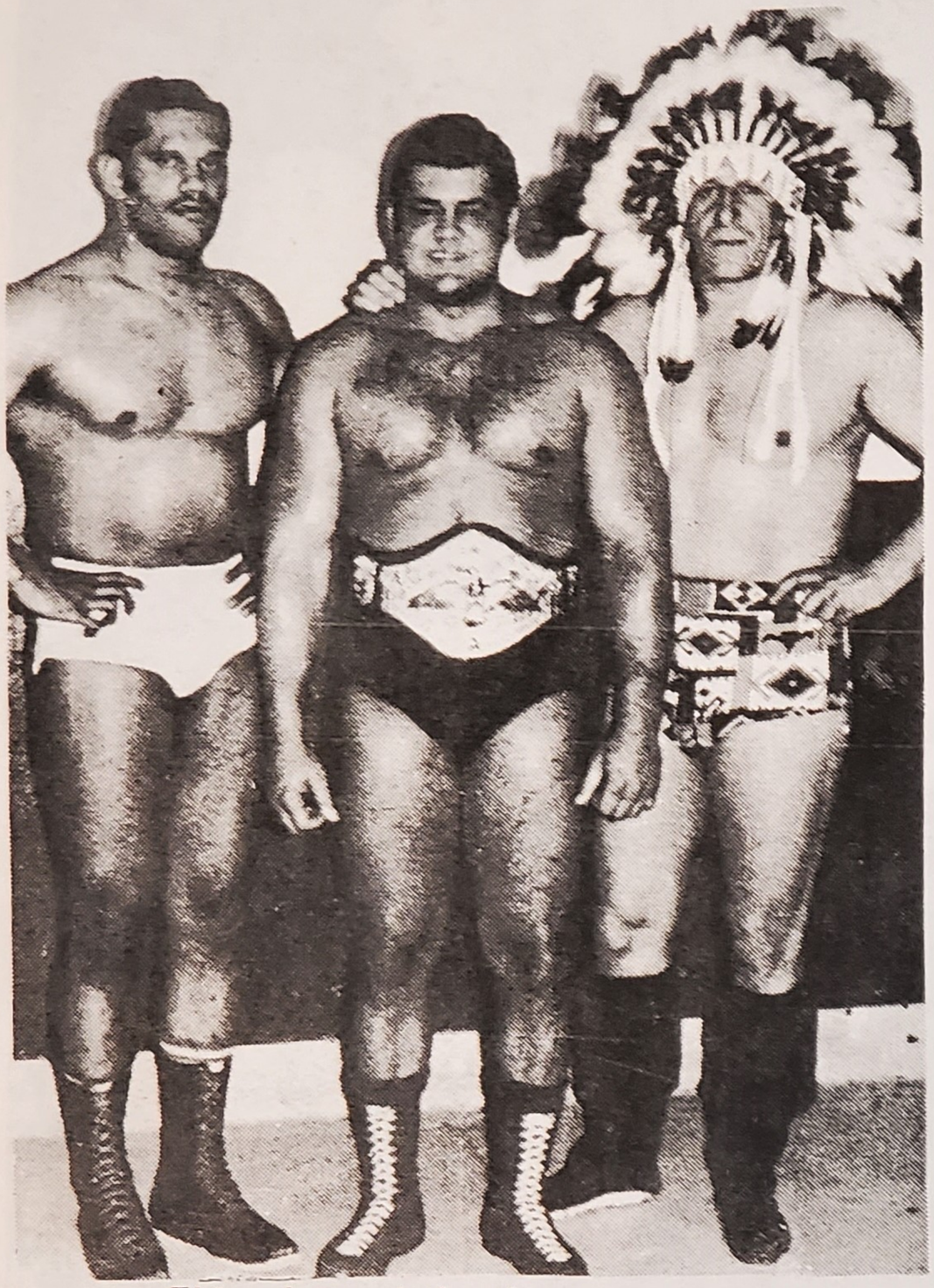
One of Pedro's hardest matches was against the young giant, Black Jack Mulligan, in Baltimore, Md. The huge Mulligan battled Morales all the way before skill and stamina of the champion prevailed.





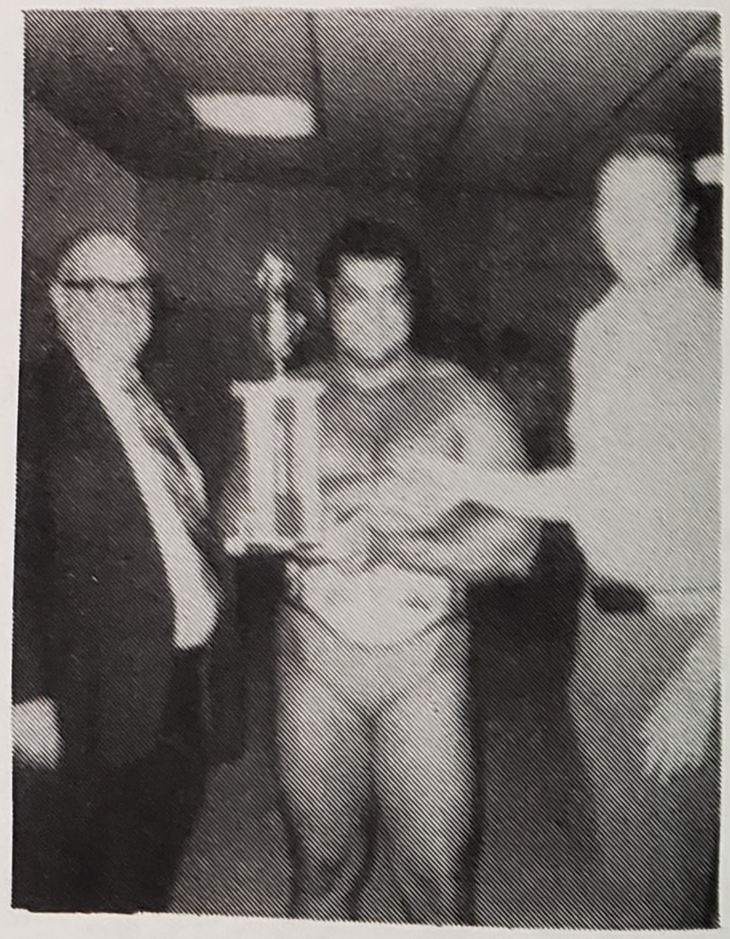


★ CANDIDLY PEDRO ★

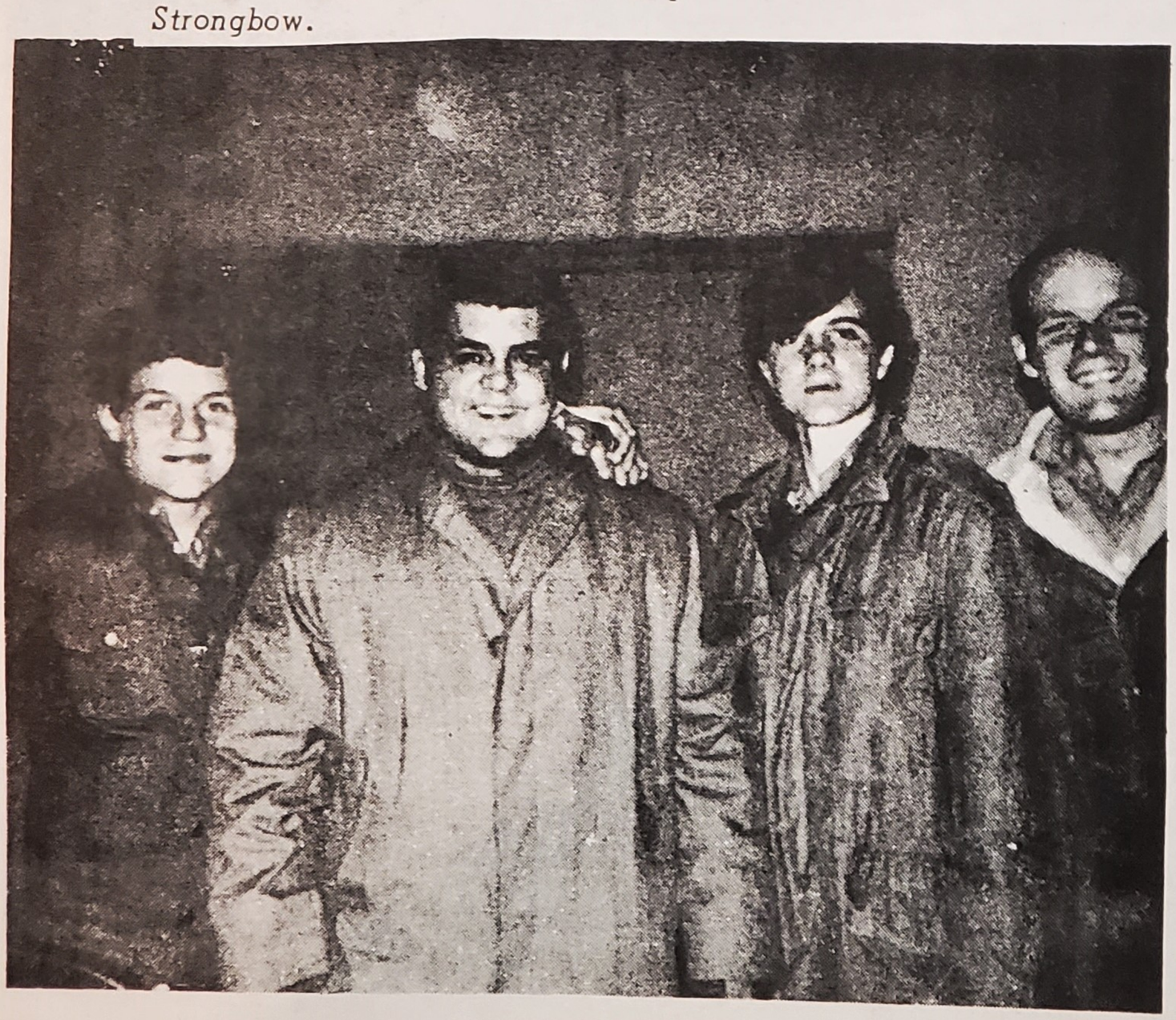


This photo of the three top stars in the east was taken by one of Pedro's fans. He is flanked by Victor Rivera and Chief Jay Strongbow.

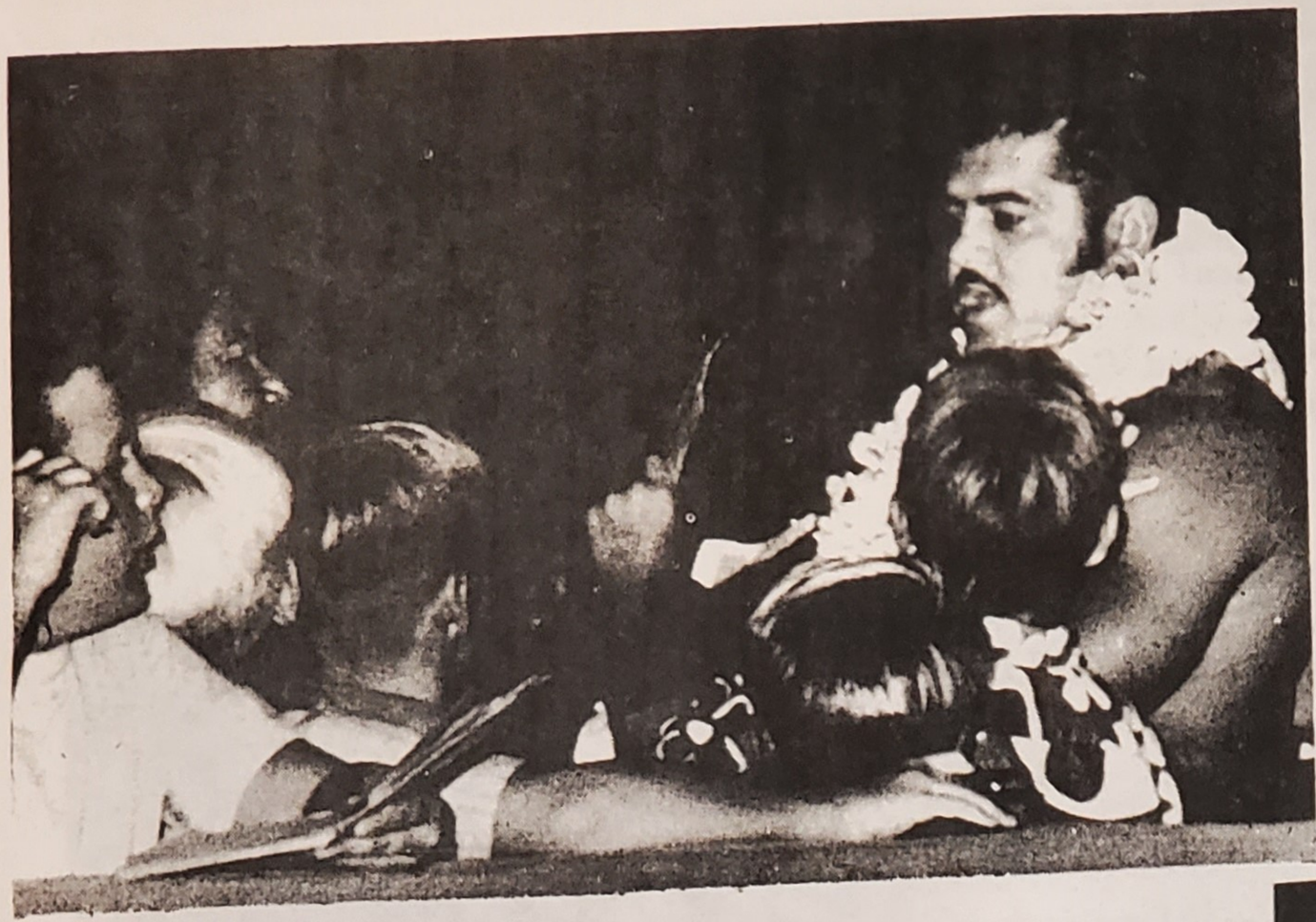
A bloody Pedro following a brawl with Fred Blassie; taken by a west coast fan.



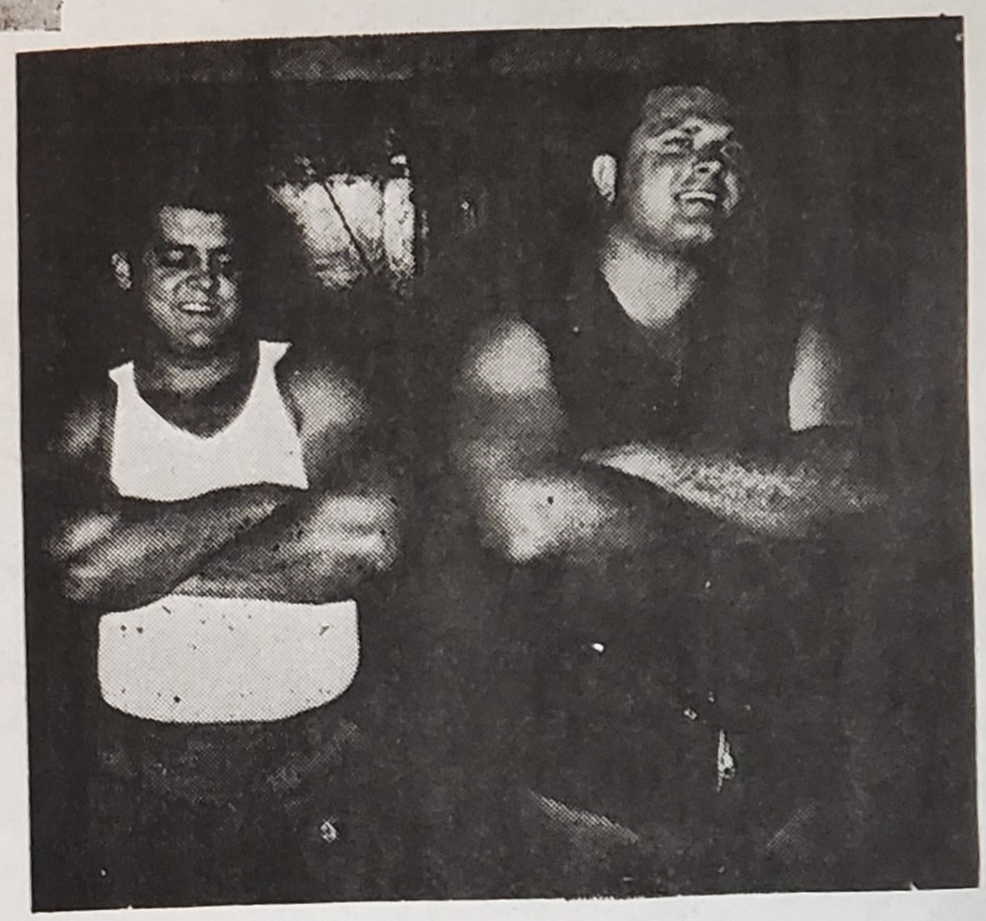
Pedro with Boston promoter and wrestling writer Don Wilson.



Morales is always happy to pose for a picture with his fans.

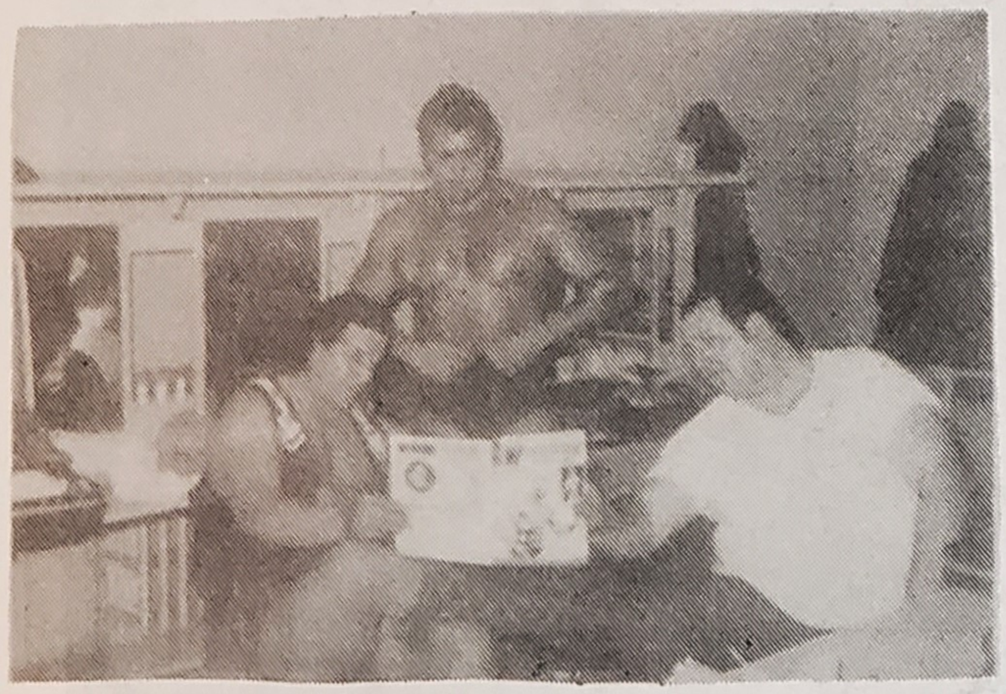


Even when he was wrestling in Hawaii Pedro was a favorite of the youngsters.



A young Pedro and a young Bill Watts caught in a relaxed pose.

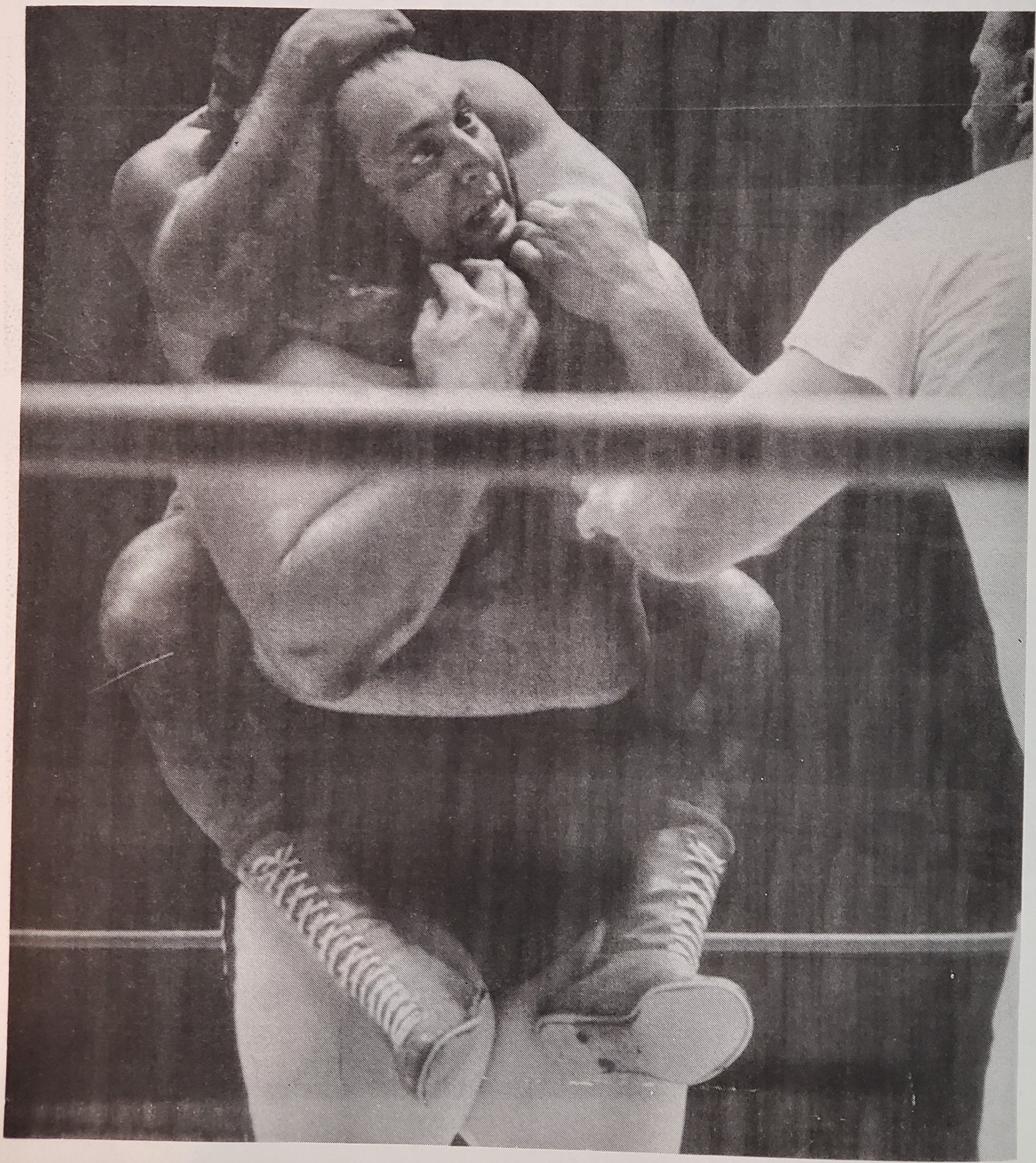
Chief Jay Strongbow, Pedro and Gorilla Monsoon, now a close pal of Morales, strike a pose for one of their fans.



Bloody but unbowed, Morales shows the strain of battle.

Pedro vs "Gorilla" Monsoon

From the heat of battle to a warm friendship—that was the case with Pedro and Gorilla Monsoon, who engaged in some torrid struggles during Pedro's years out west. It was Monsoon who helped convince Morales he should return to the east coast.



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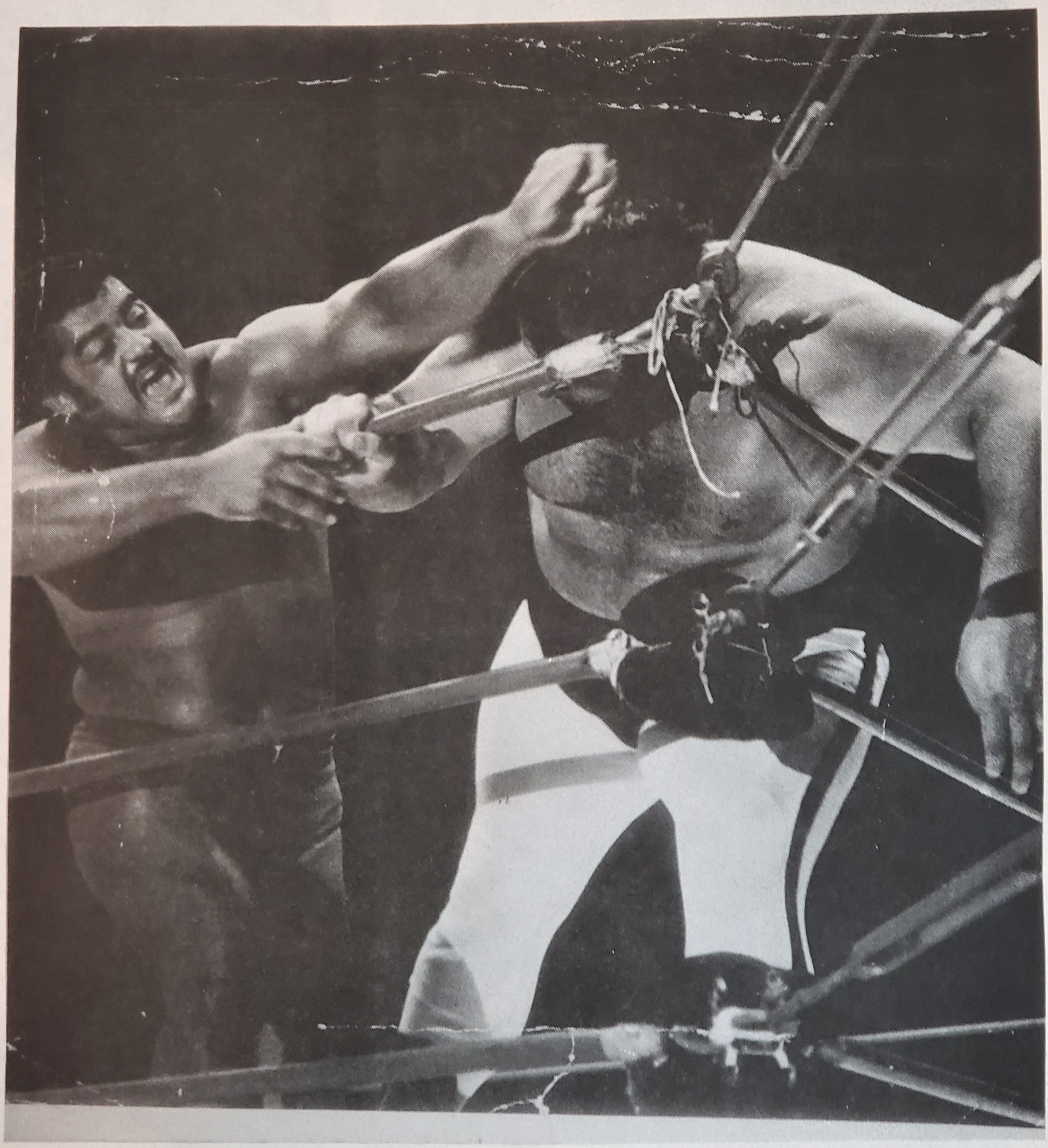
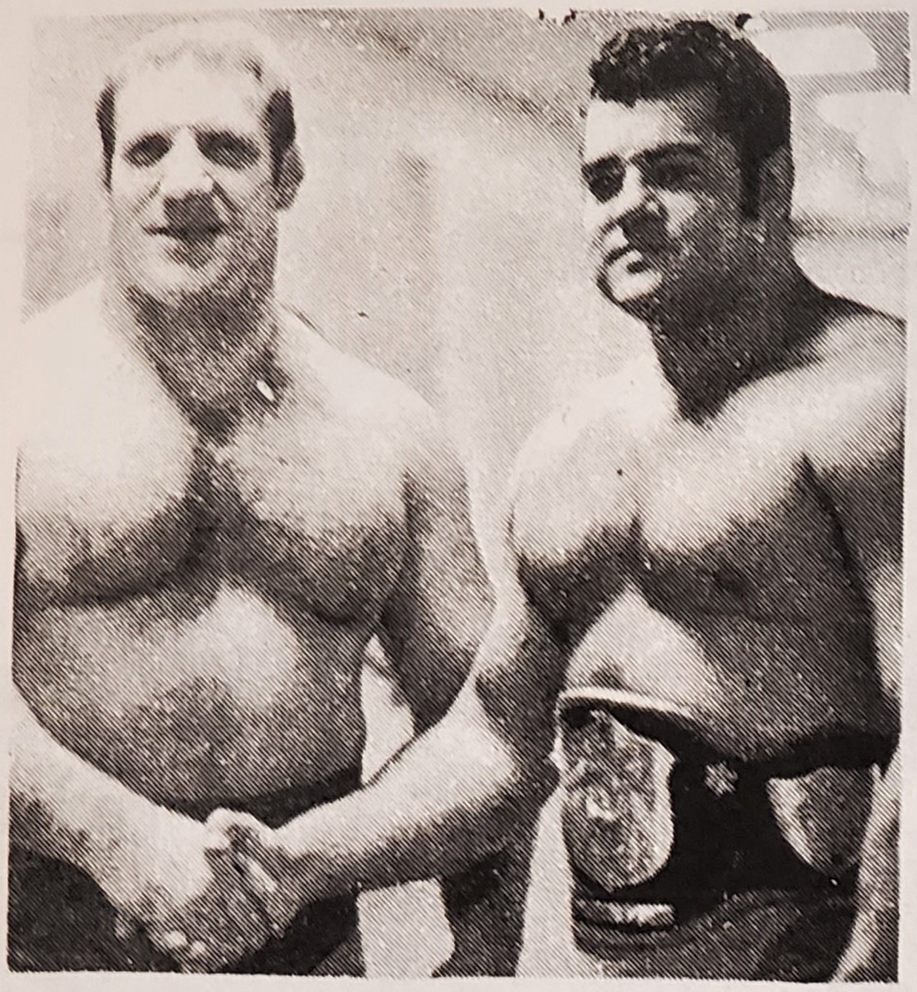
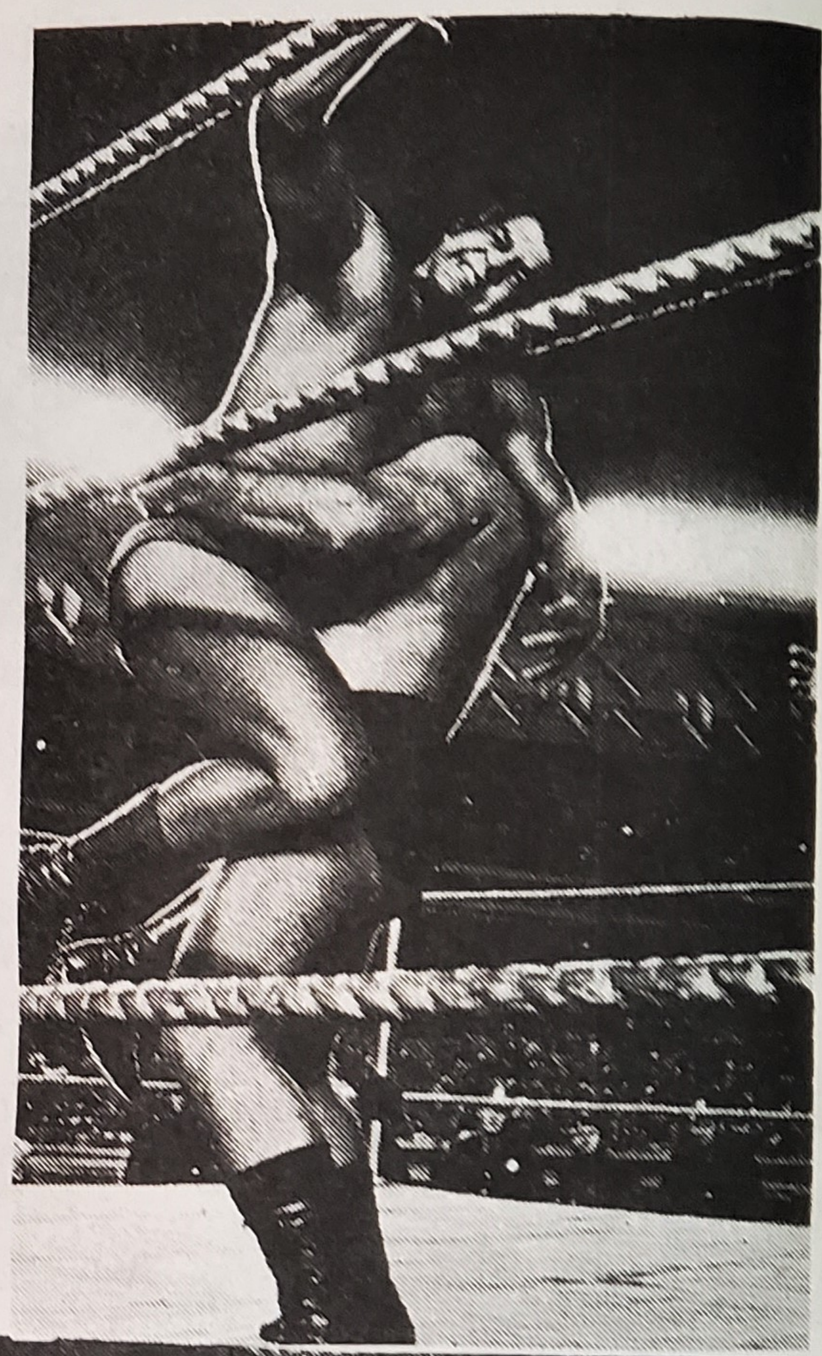


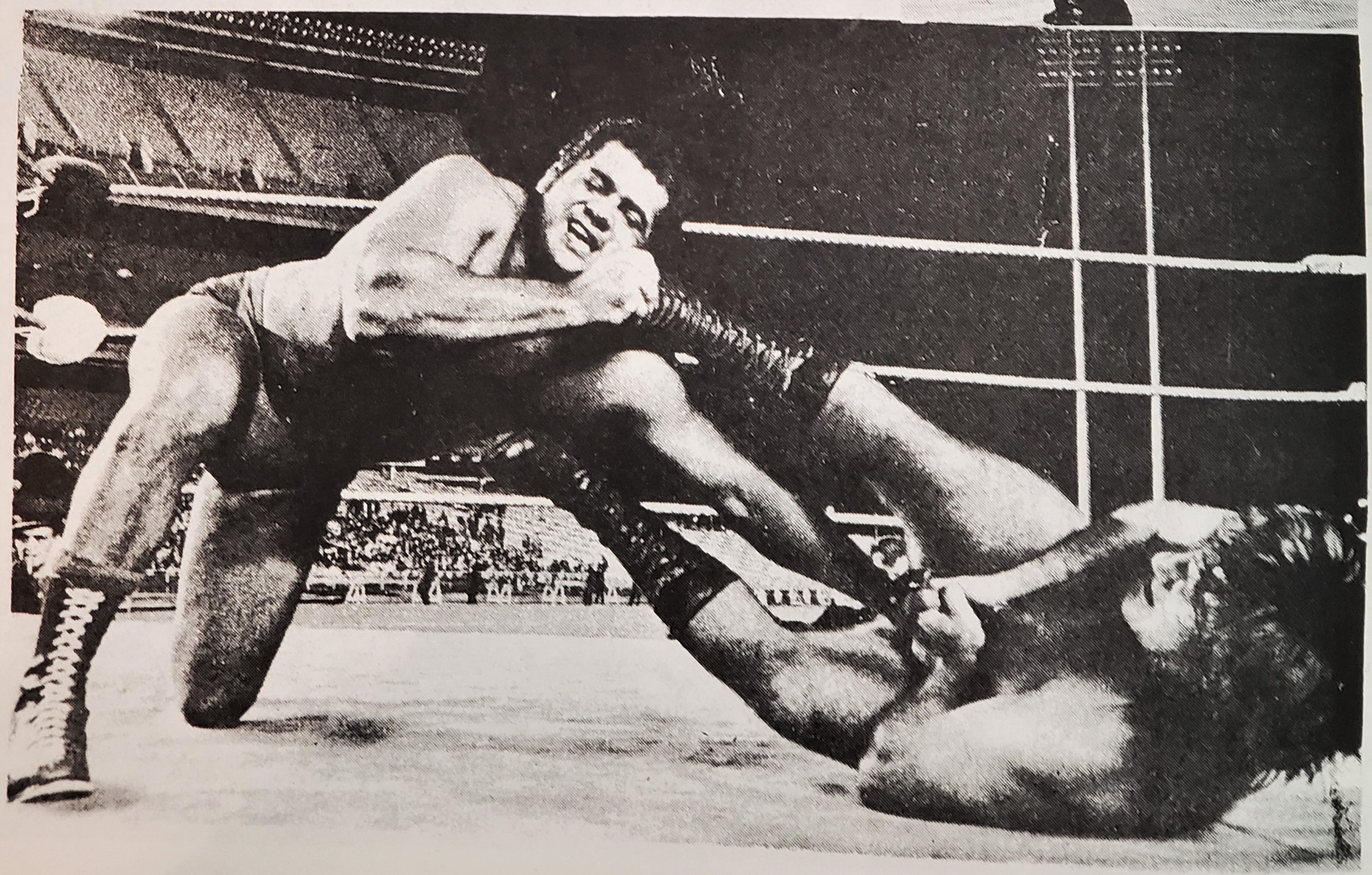
PEDRO vs

Match of



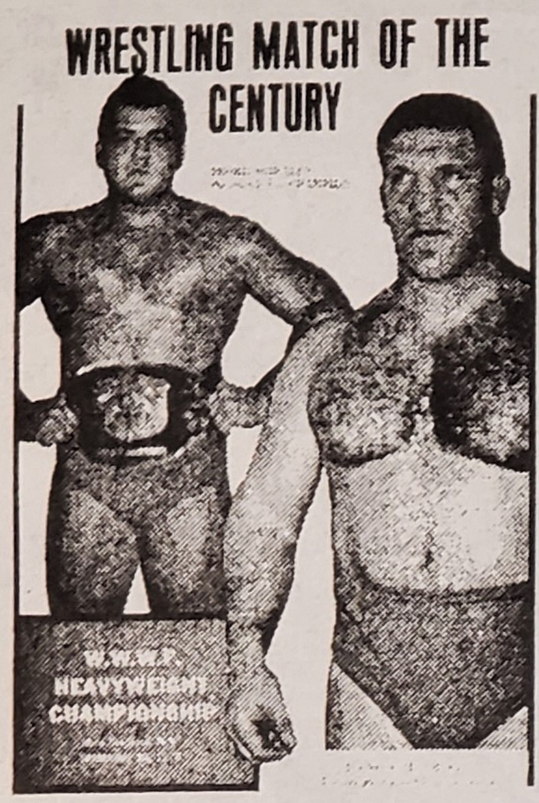


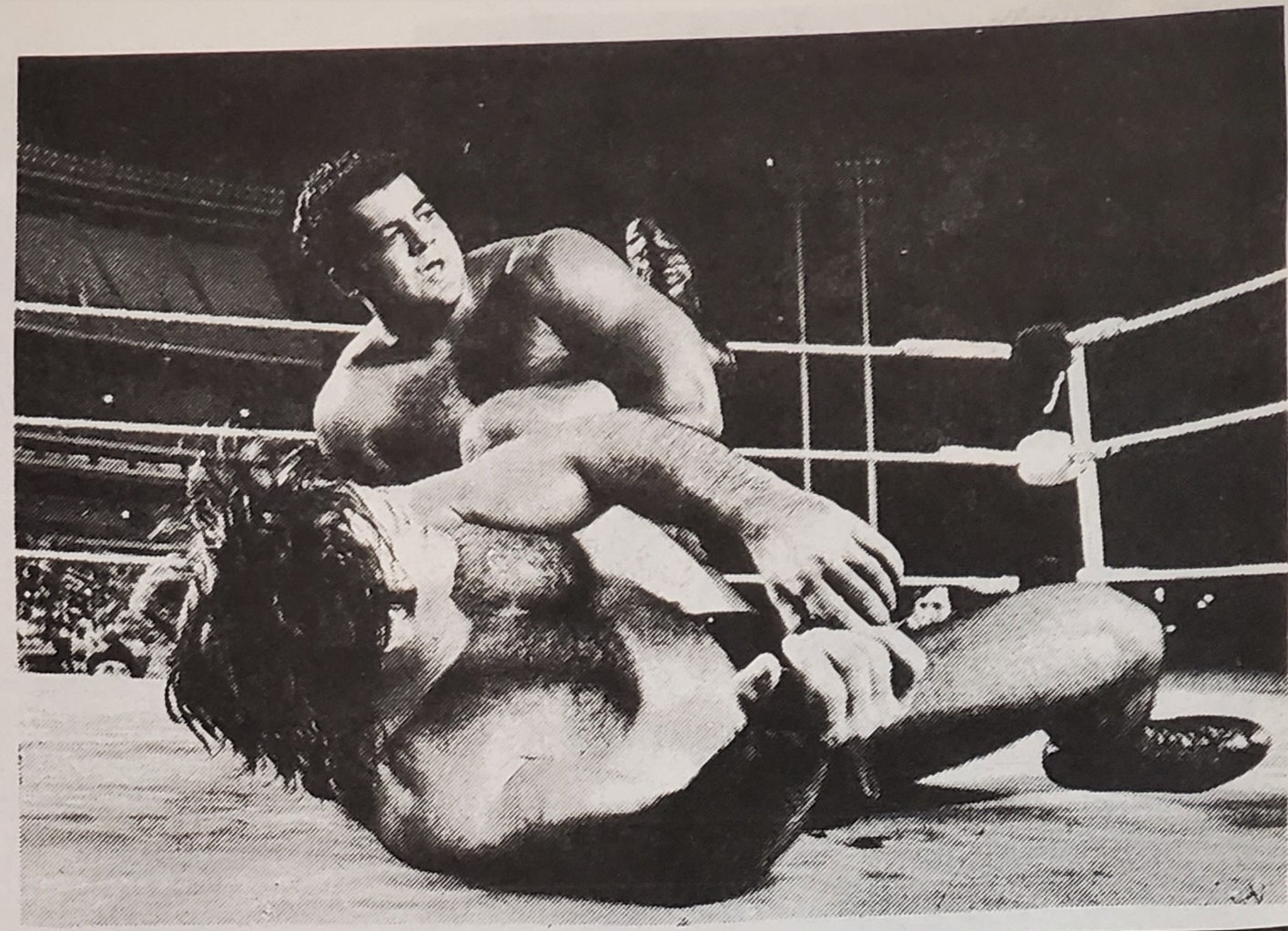
The Clash of Giants––that's what it was when Morales and Bruno Sammartino met at Shea Stadium in New York on Sept. 30, 1972. The epic battle raged for 75 minutes, ending only when the curfew bell rang. It was one of the great moments in wrestling history as first one, then the other seemed on the verge of victory, but always their great courage and skill came to the rescue and when it was over the huge crowd of over 22,500 was as exhausted as were Pedro and Bruno. The match drew a record-setting gross gate of $140,923.00––a remarkable figure considering that the weather was very bad.

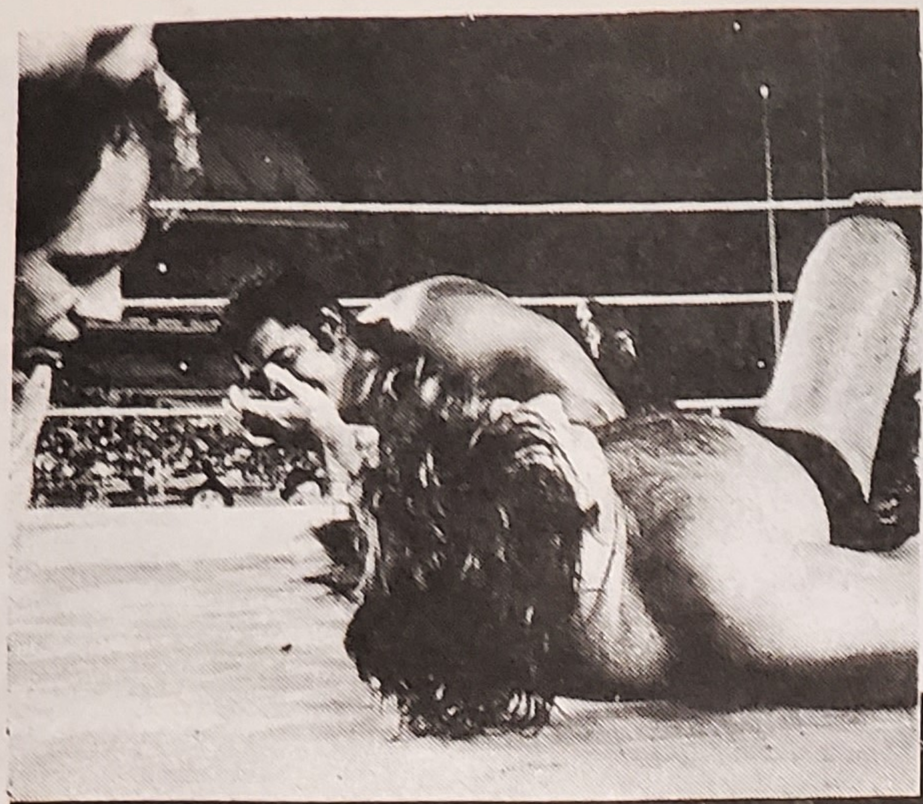


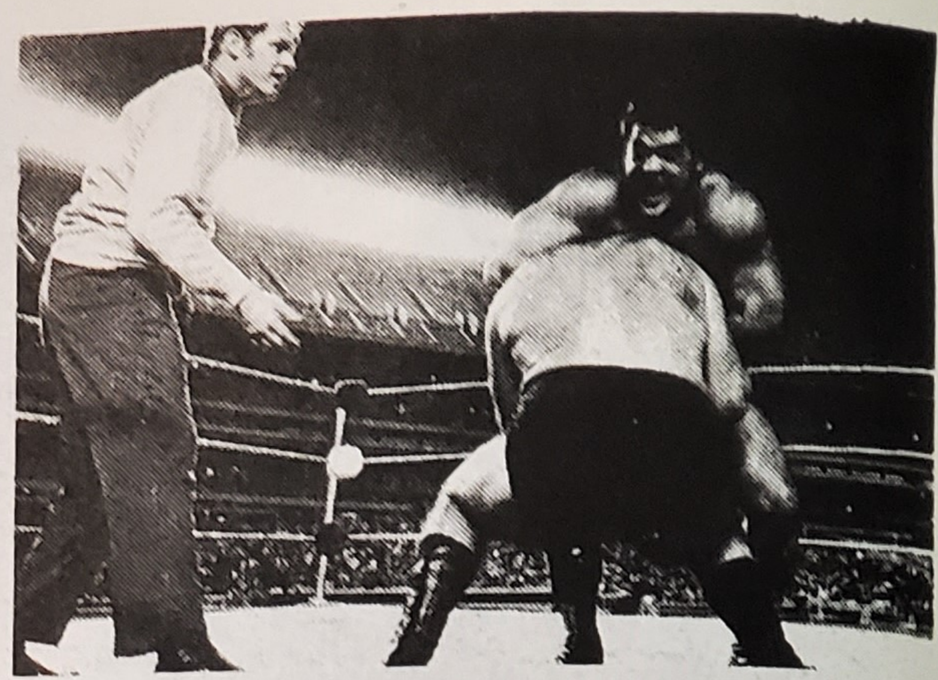
BRUNO

the Century

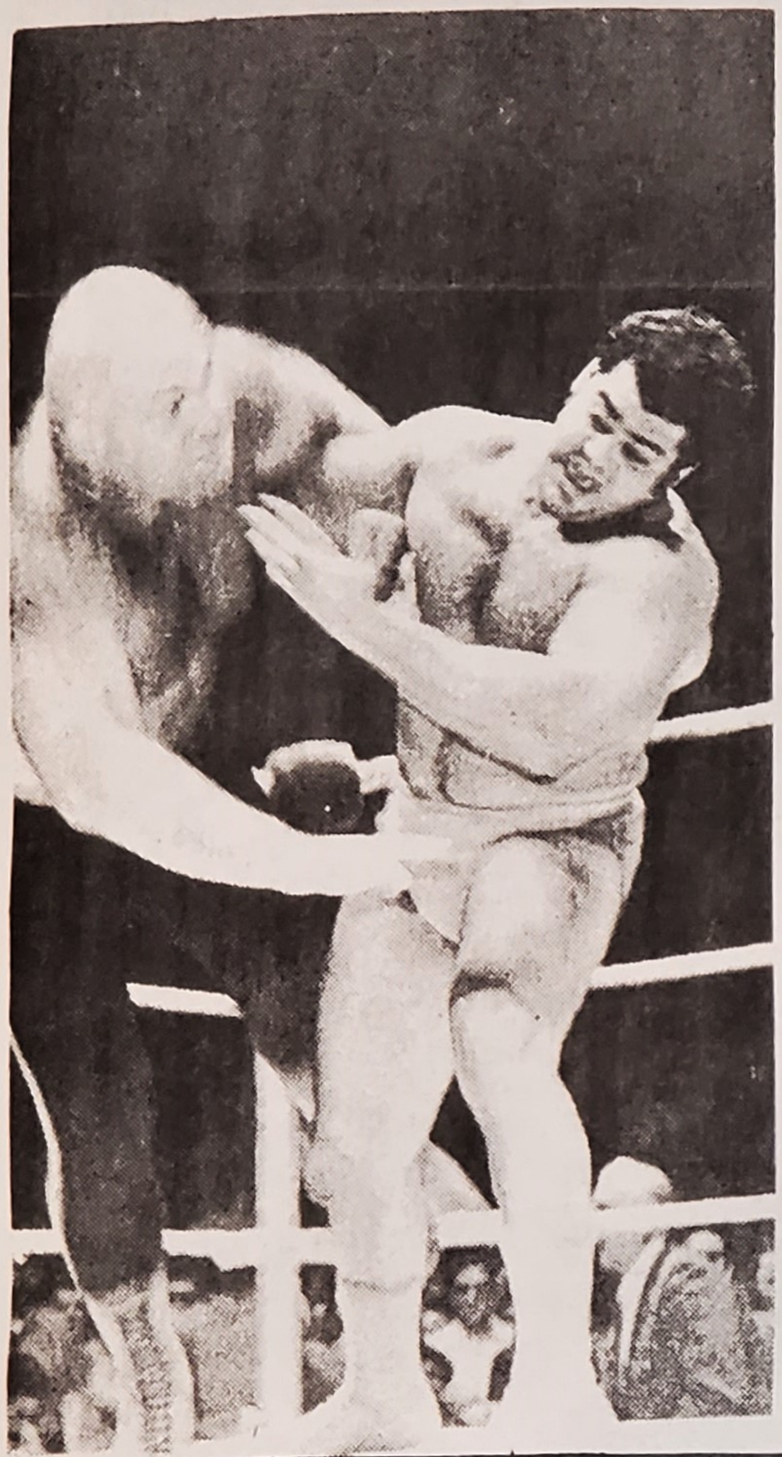


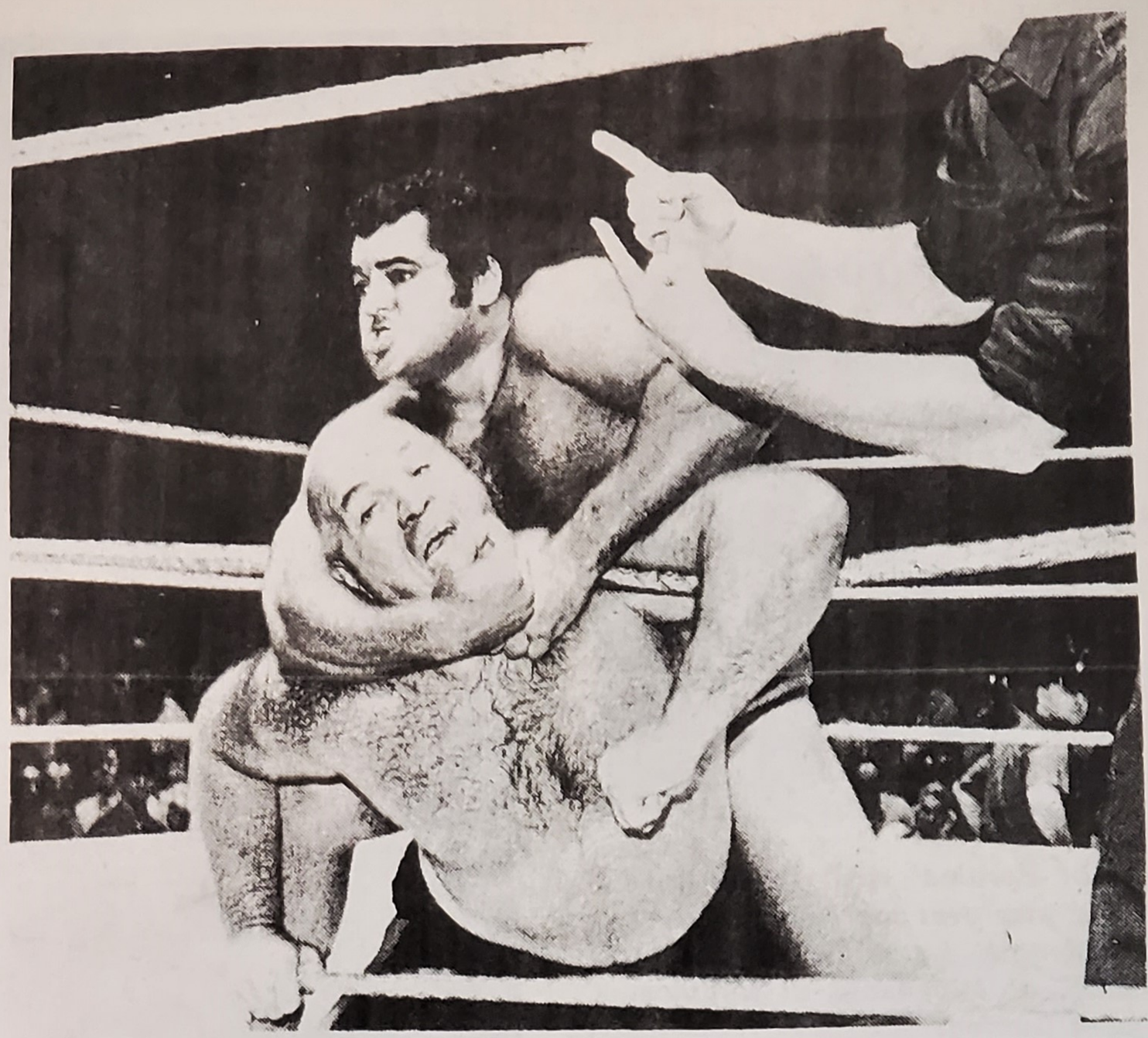




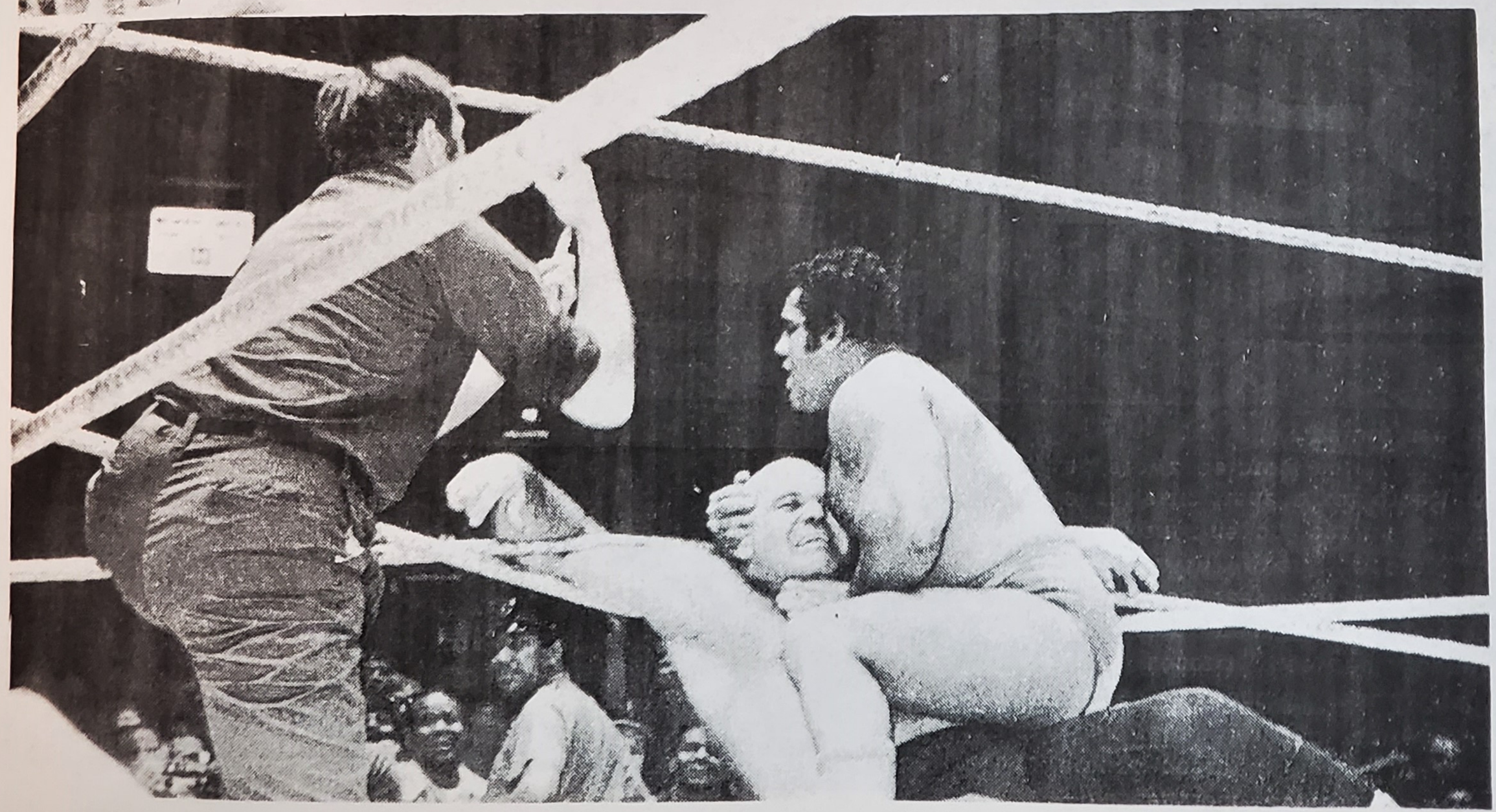


Pedro vs George "The Animale" Steele





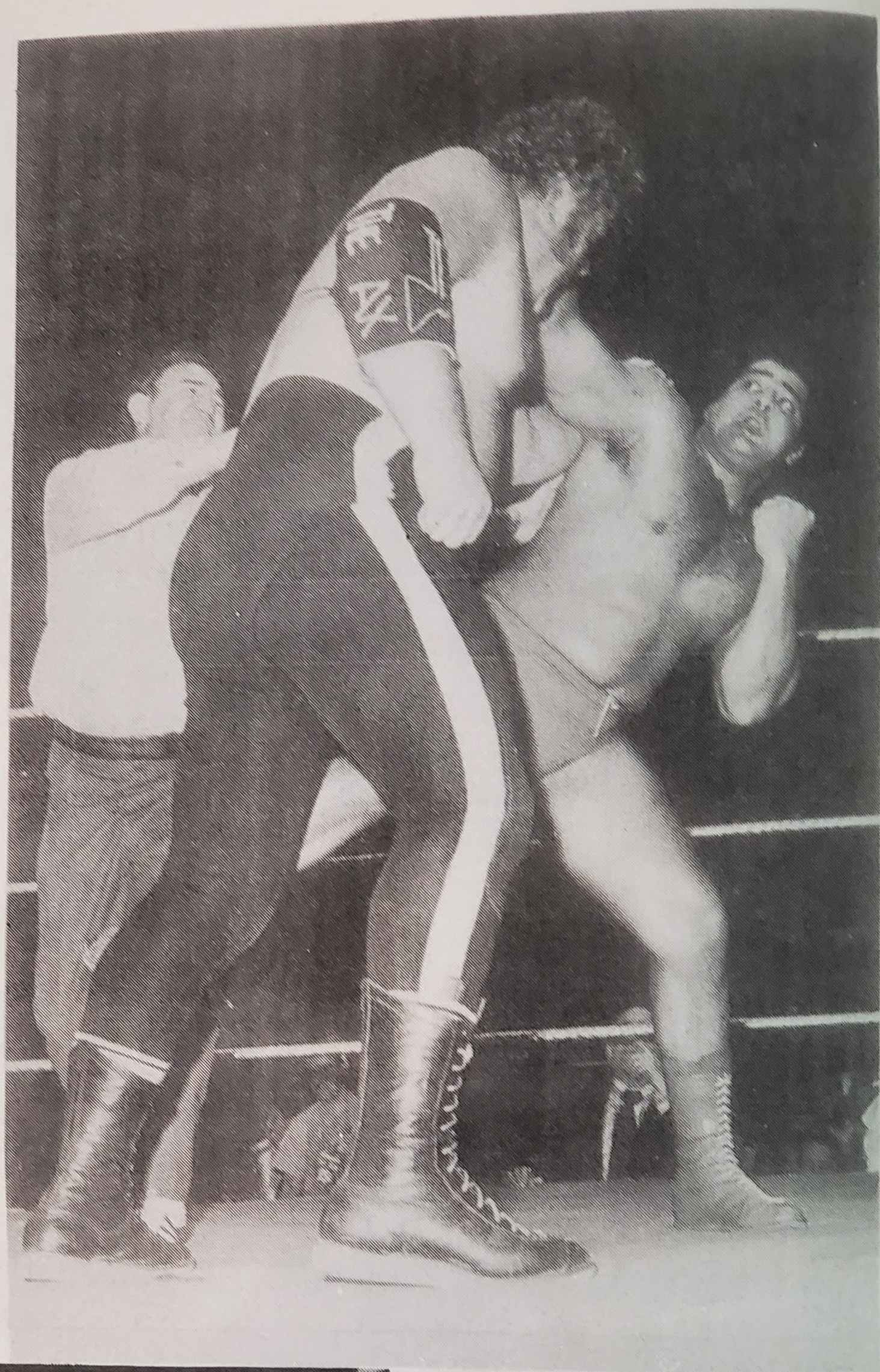
Another tough nut that Morales had to crack was George "The Animal" Steele, the bruiser from the midwest; the vicious tactics of Steele made the mildmannered Morales lose his temper and he came close to being disqualified.



Pedro

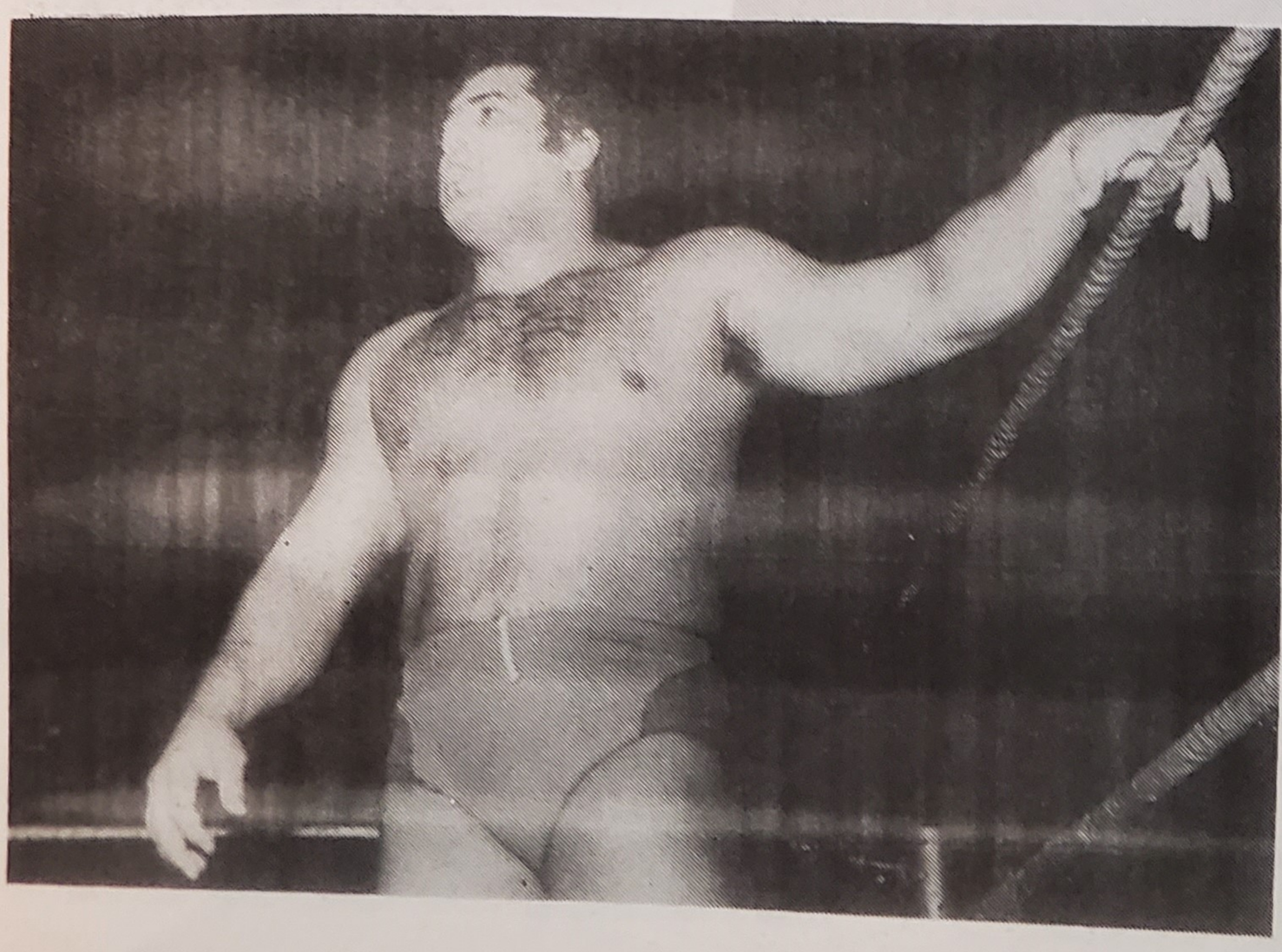
vs

"Pretty Boy" Hennig

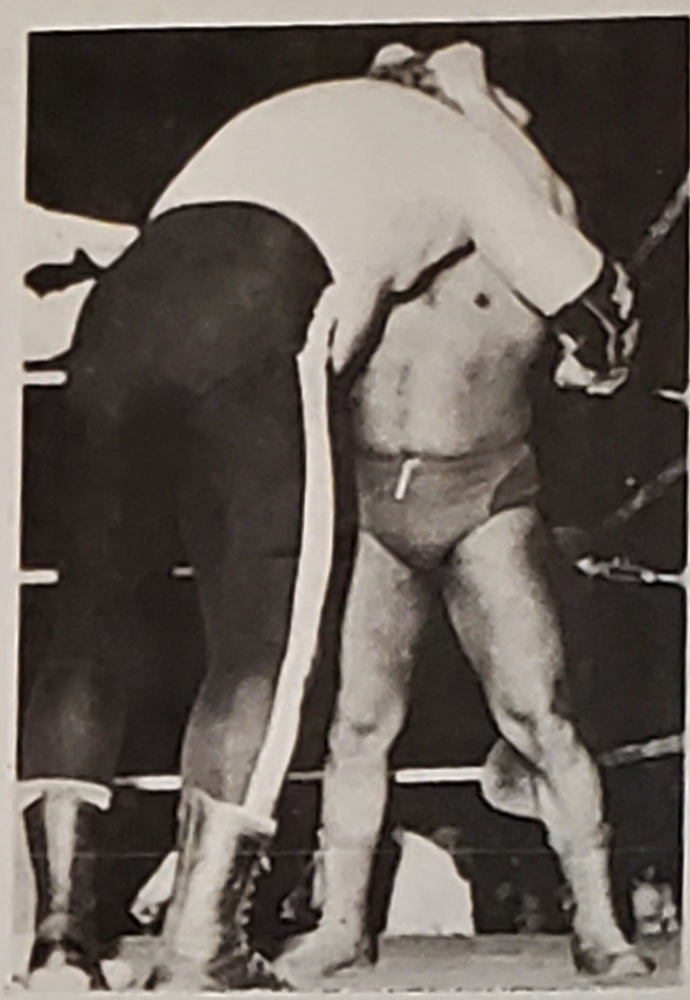


One of Morales' most recent triumphs was over the crafty, strong and brutal Larry 'Pretty Boy' Hennig of Minnesota at Madison Square Garden.

The foul deeds of Hennig so enraged Morales that he was ready to cold conk 'Pretty Boy' as referee Eddie Gersh steps in.



Morales screamed at the referee to put a stop to the foul and unfair tactics used by Hennig: 'Or I will!'



Pedro got hung, by doing a little hair-pulling on his own.

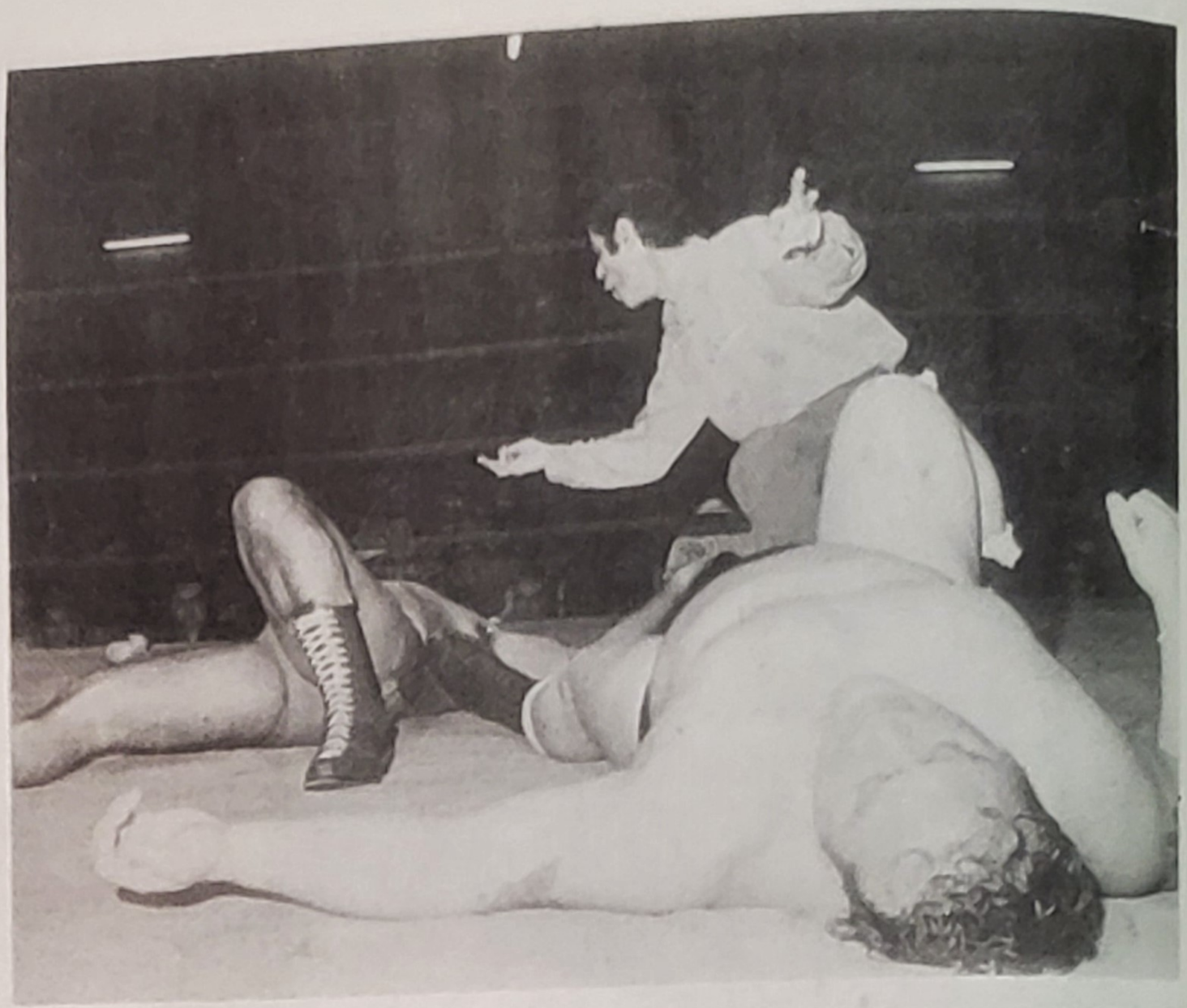
(above) A groggy and battered Hennig is about to get a forearm smash from Morales as the ref keeps a close eye on things. (below) Announcer Bob Freed raises Pedro's hand in victory.

Pedro

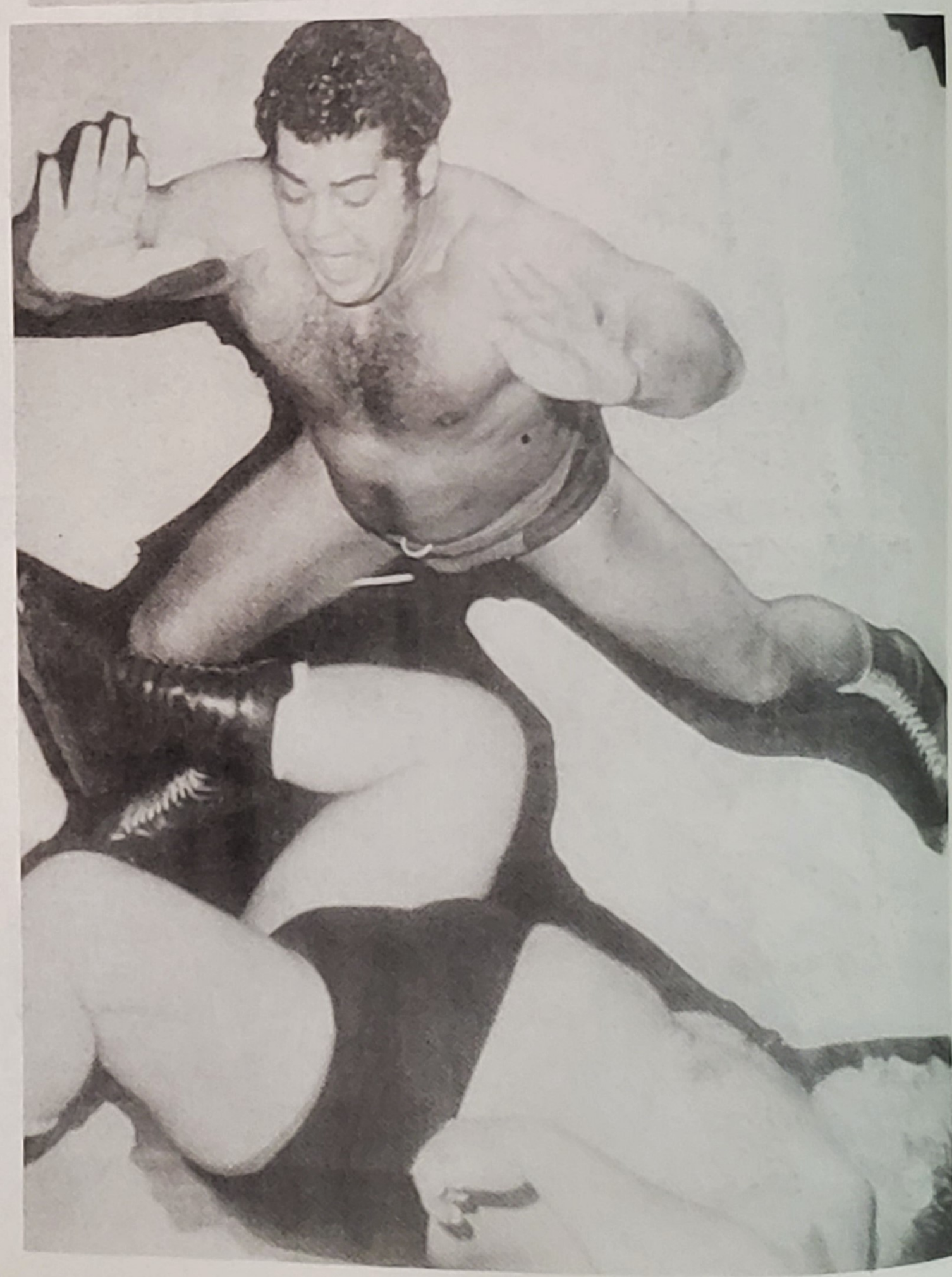
vs

Bulldog

Brower

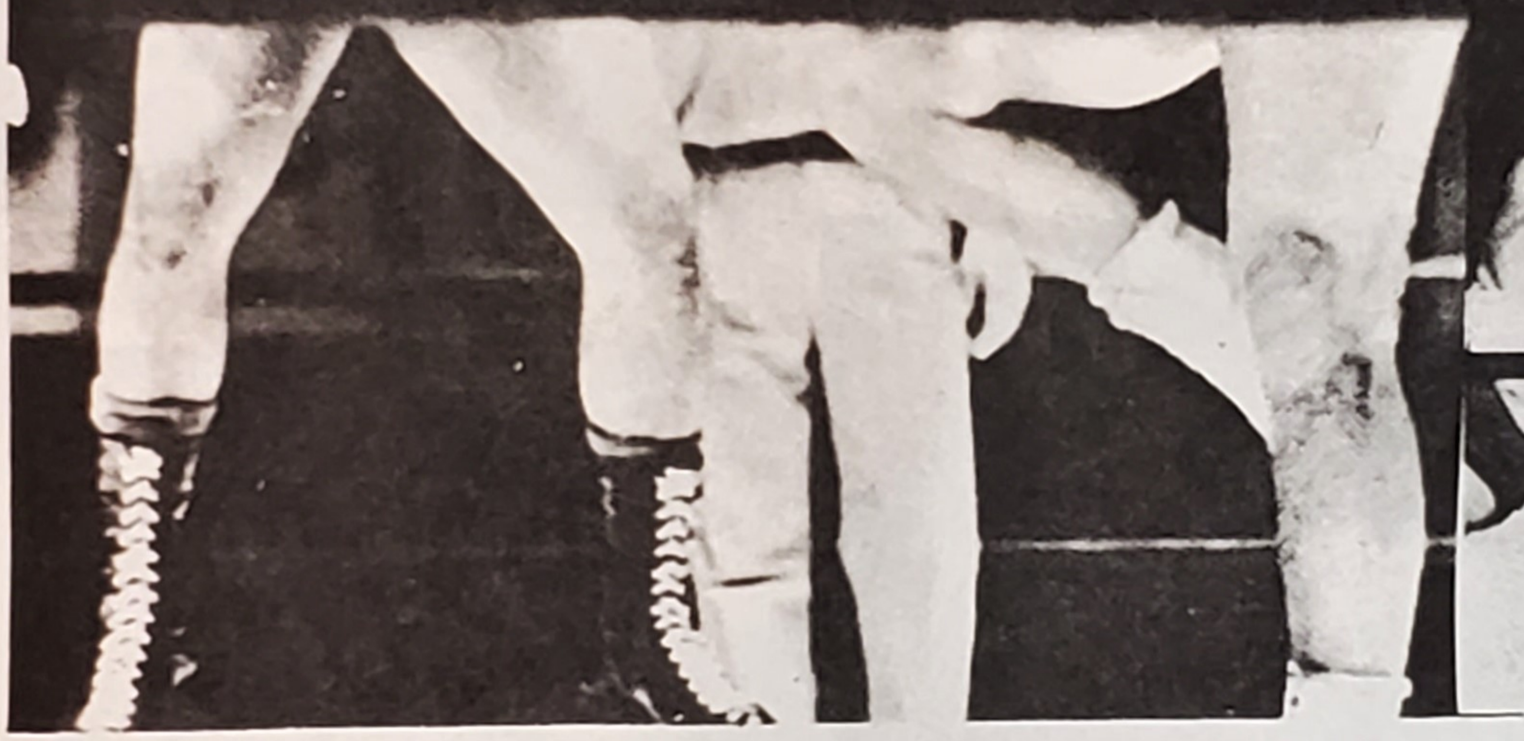


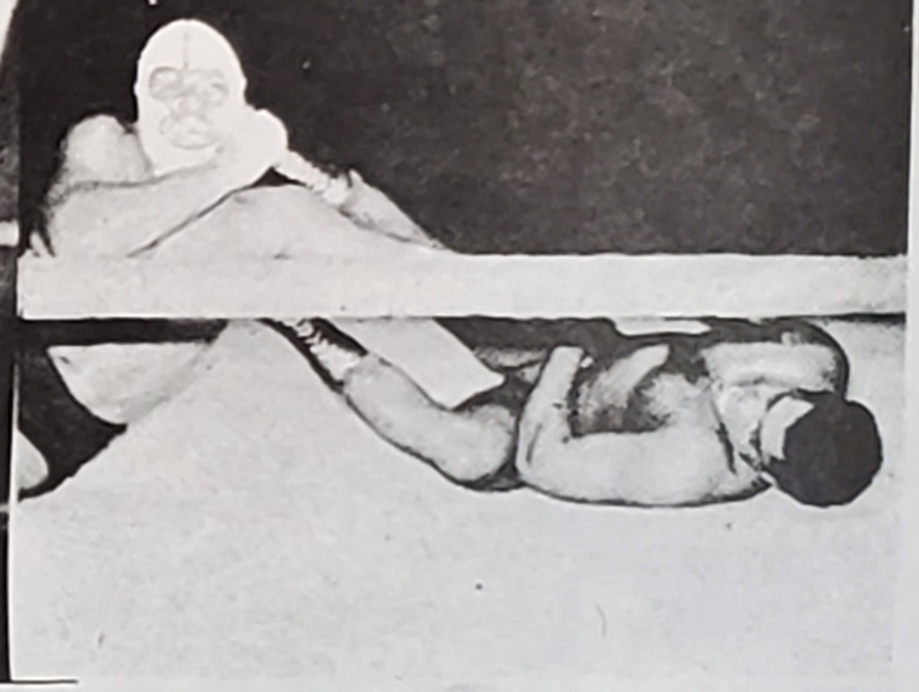
'Bulldog' Dick Brower was another who came close to subduing Morales—the power and viciousness of Brower were almost enough—but once again Pedro called on his great reserve of courage and came back to finish off Brower with a terrific body press.

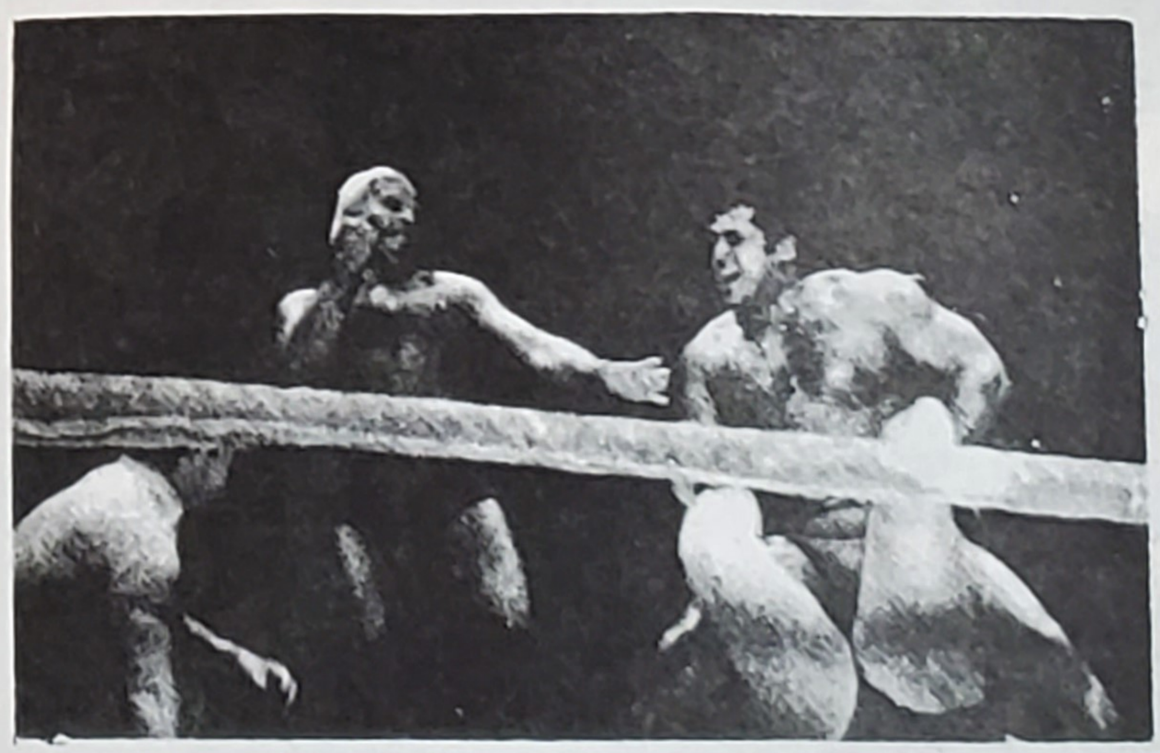


Pedro's Greatest Matches

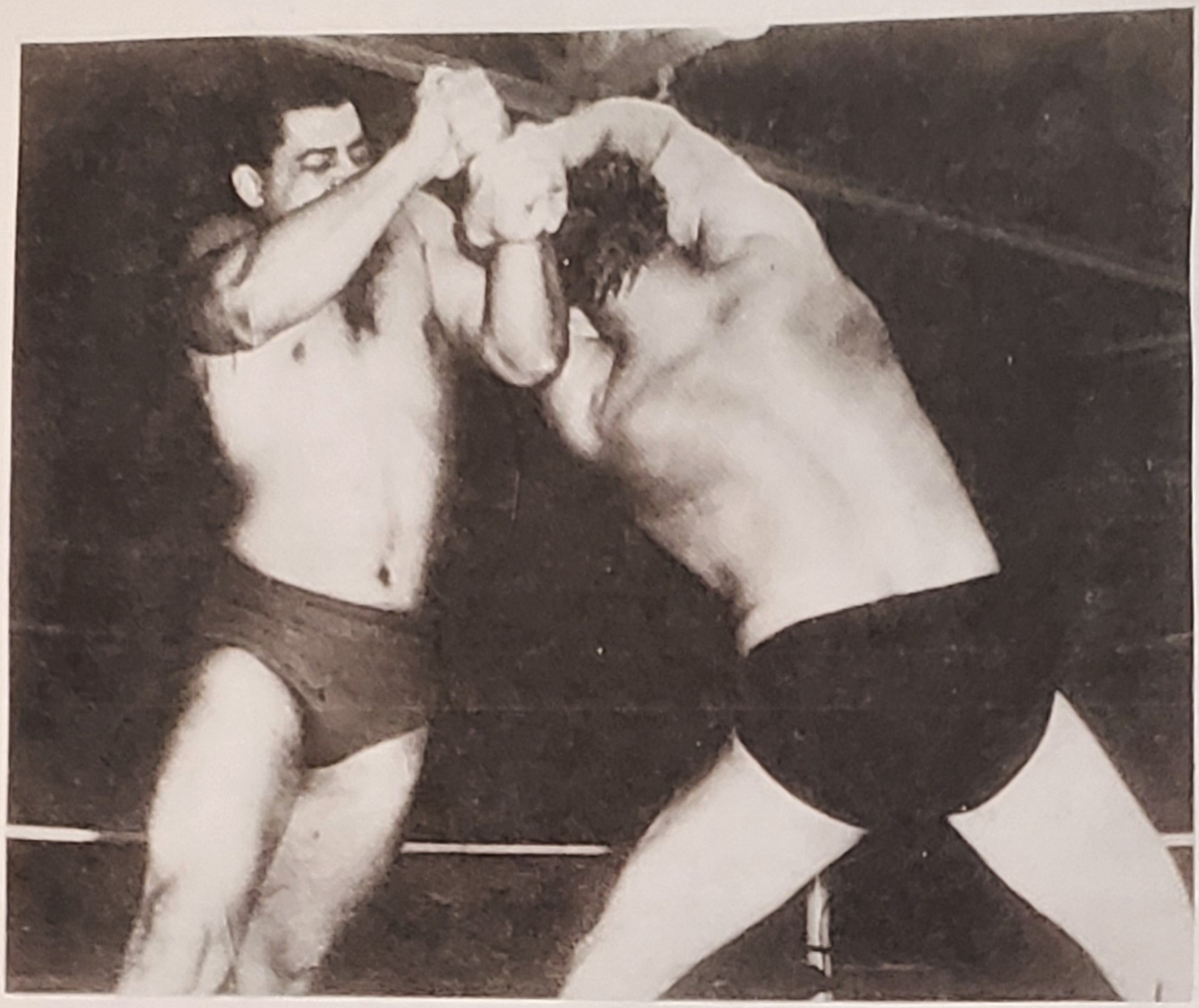
The Destroyer––from whom Pedro won the W.W.A. title––was a bitter rival of Morales; their clashes were classics, with skill on both sides; but in the end it was Morales who came out on top.



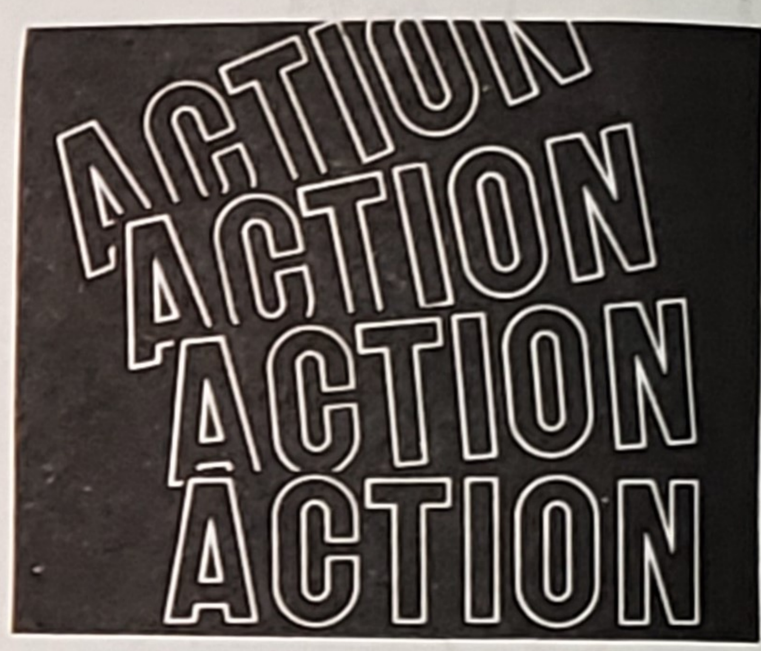


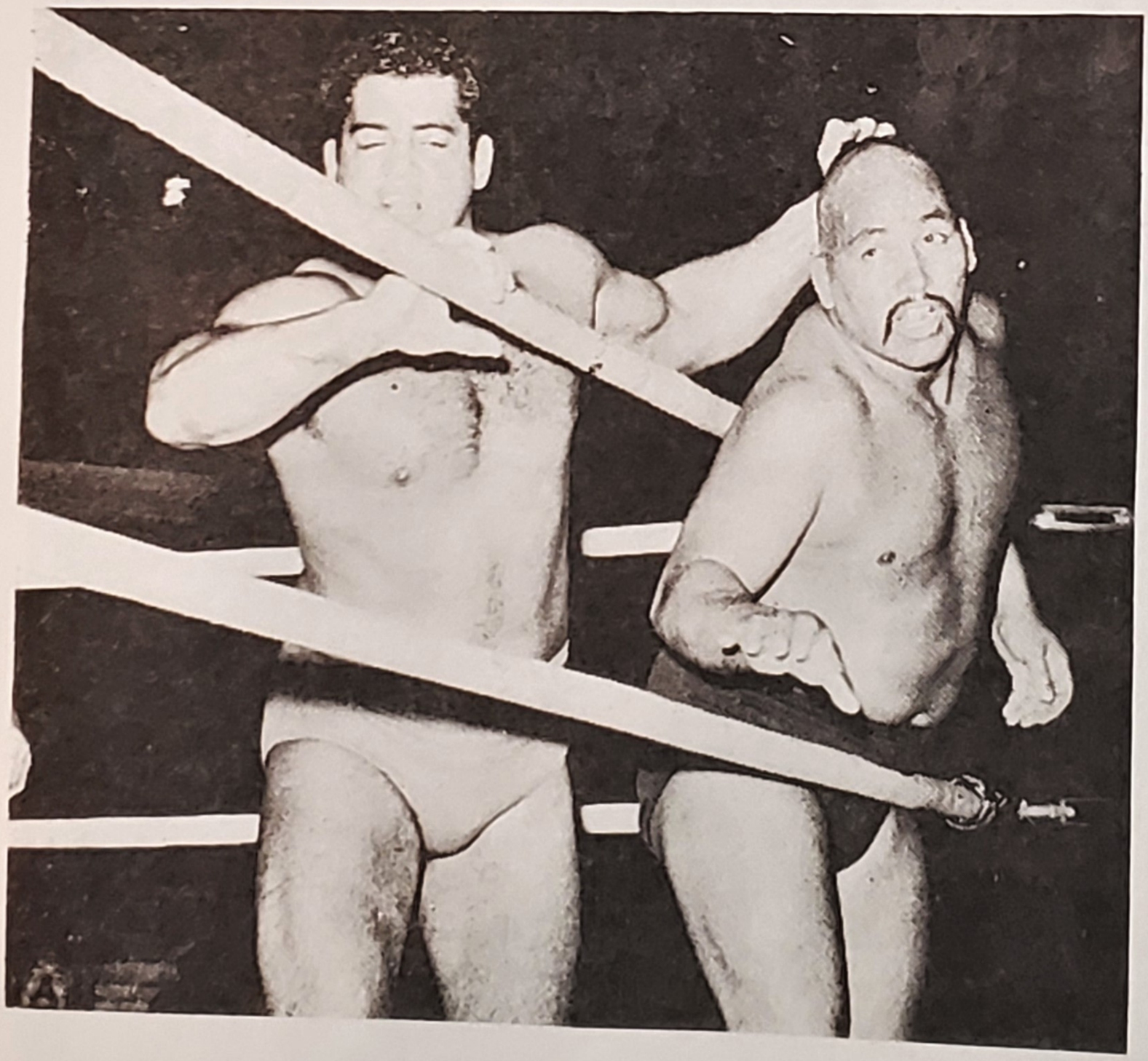


The Spoiler (left) was another who fell before the fury of Morales. (above) Tarzan Tyler comes to the rescue of his partner Luke Graham during a tag match that saw Pedro paired with Victor Rivera.

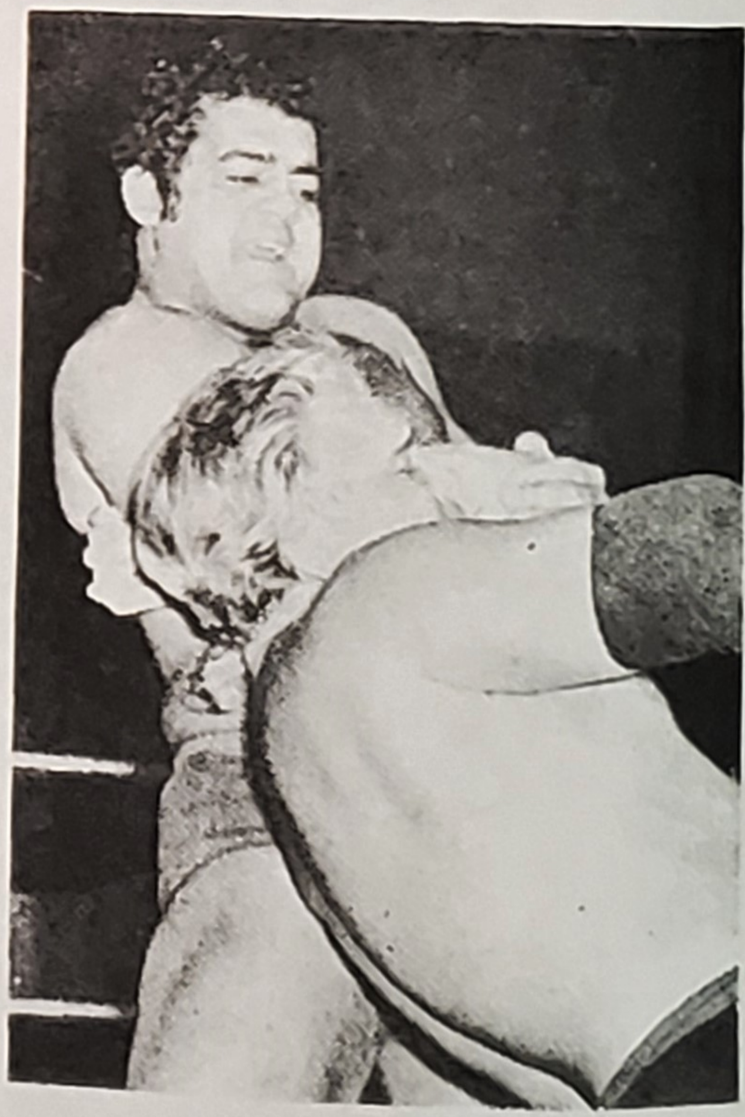


It was a test of strength as Pedro and Billy 'Red' Lyons met in Los Angeles; it was in battles with such stars as Lyons that Morales learned the skills that stand him in such good stead today.

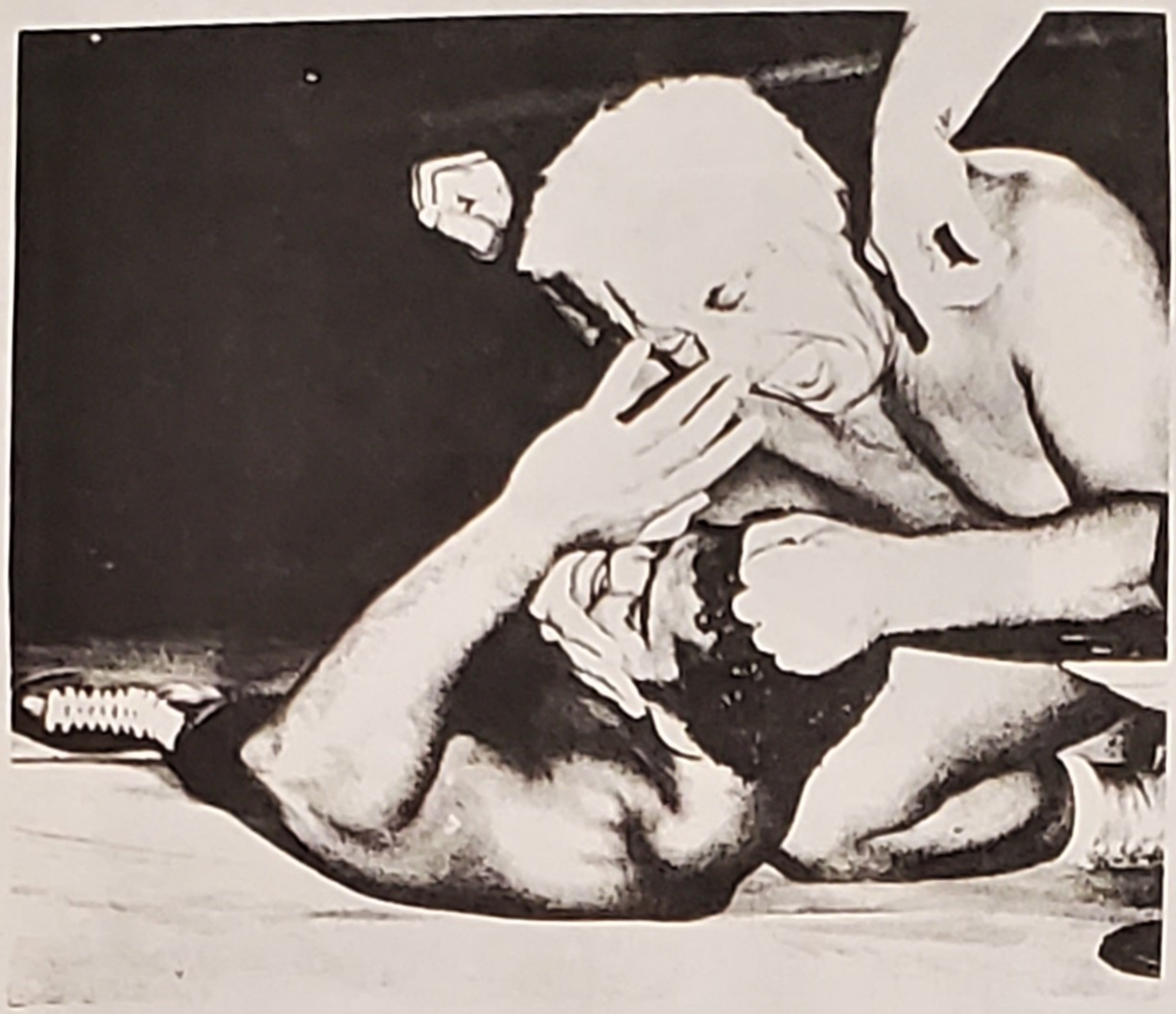




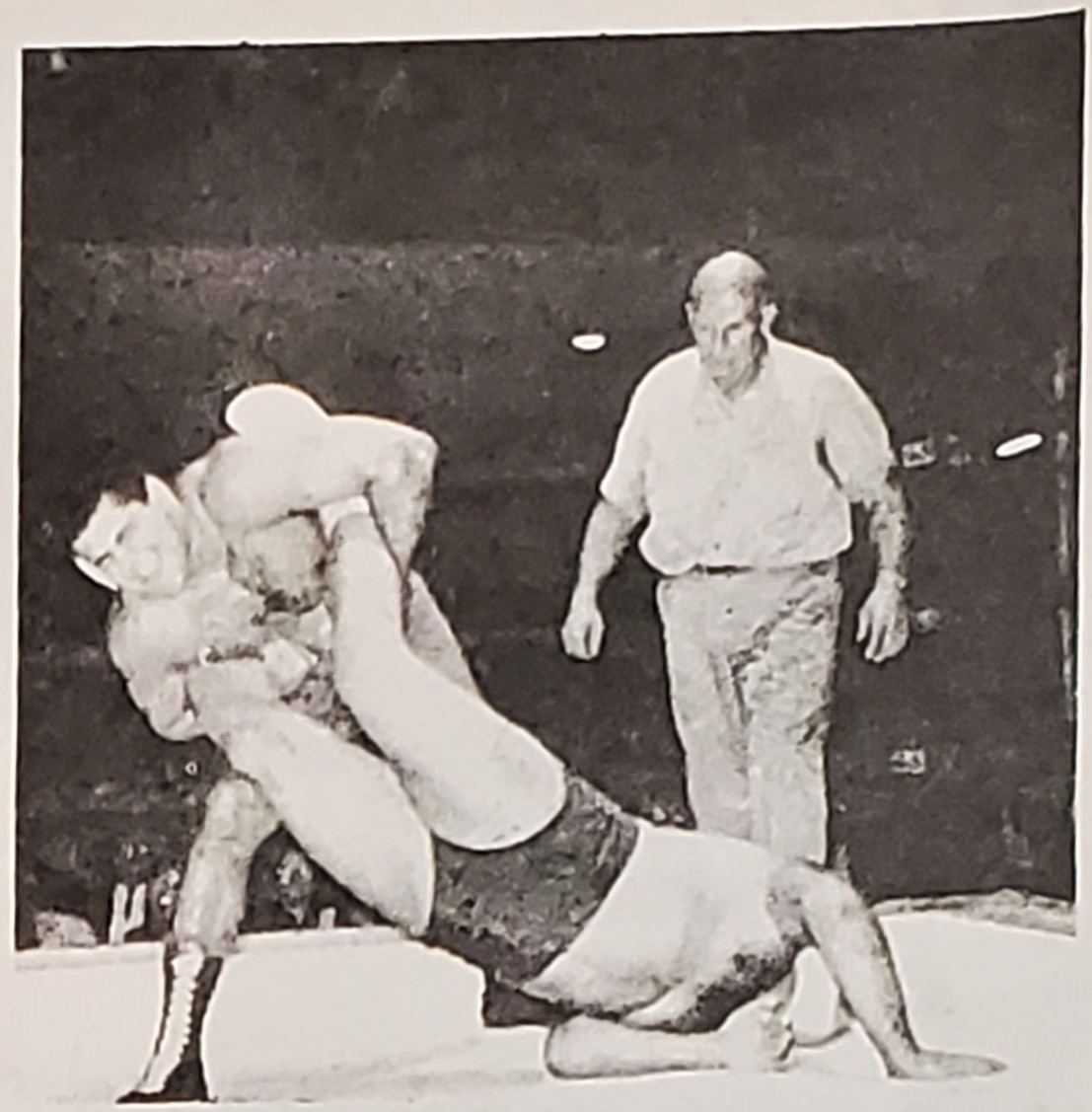
The brutal oriental, El Mongol, was another of the west coast baddies that Morales defanged.



Up Boston way, Jimmy Valient was top dog--that is, until he ran into Morales.

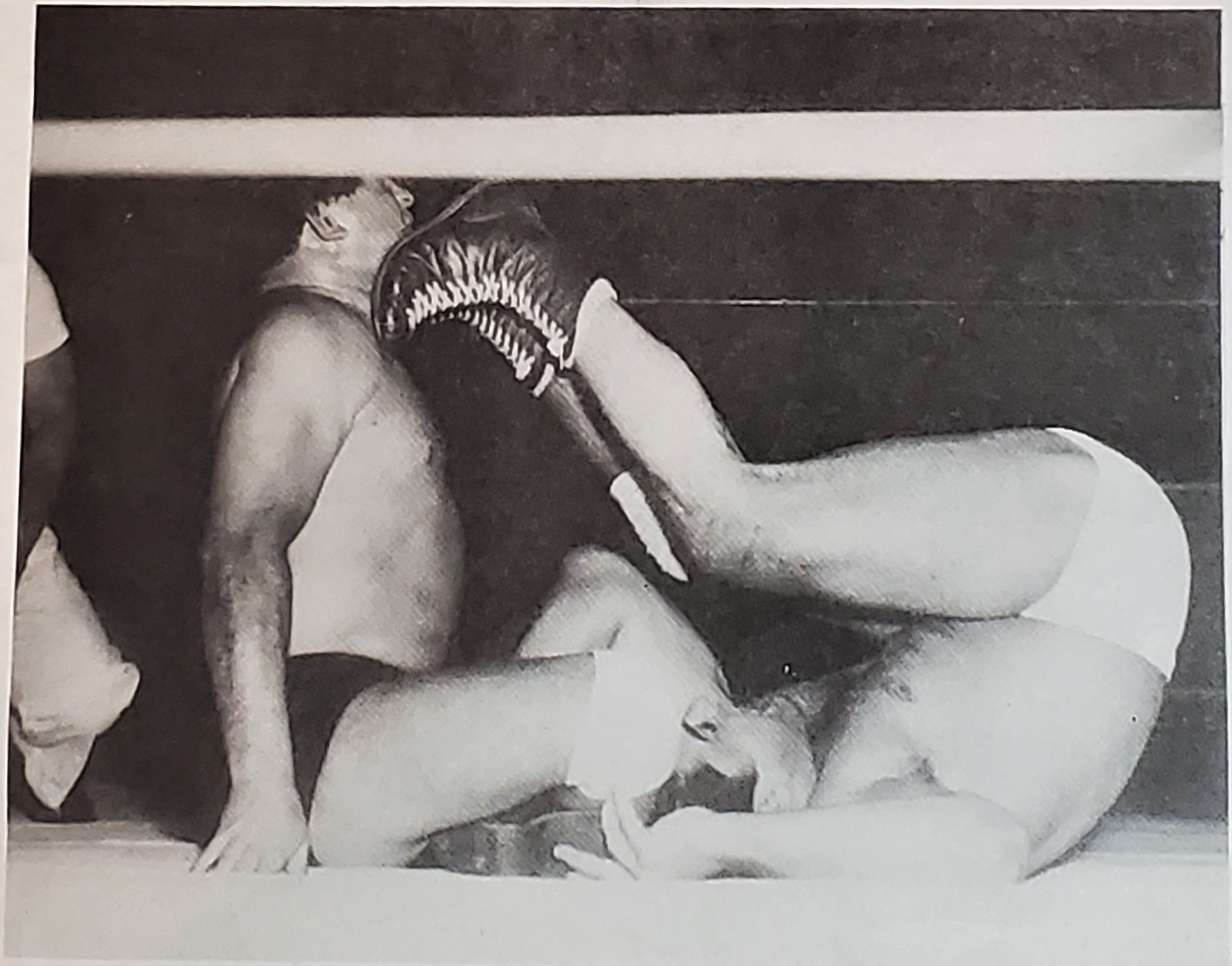


Of all the men Morales has wrestled the only one he really hated was Fred Blassie, the bloodthirsty vampire, who left his mark on Morales (tooth mark, that is).



Morales used a Boston Crab hold to subdue the Hangman, another of the Villains who failed in their attempts to turn back Pedro.

It was fancy footwork that Pedro brought into play as he defeated Billy Gonzalez in Amarillo, Texas early in his career.

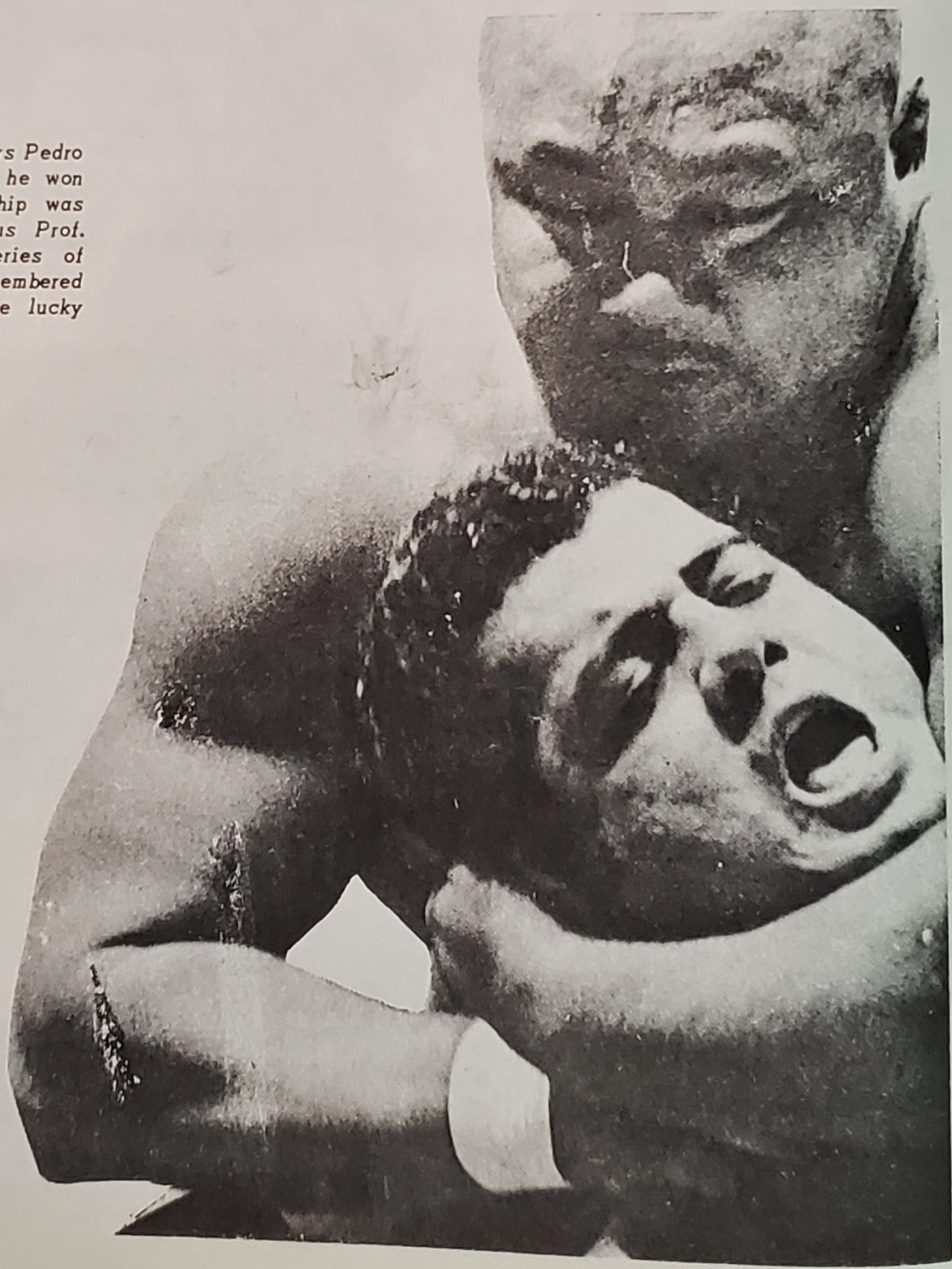


Pedro

vs

Prof. Tauro

Tanaka



One of the first challengers Pedro had to dispose of after he won the W.W.W.F. championship was the evil and treacherous Prof. Turo Tanaka. Their series of battles will long be remembered by those fans who were lucky enough to view them.

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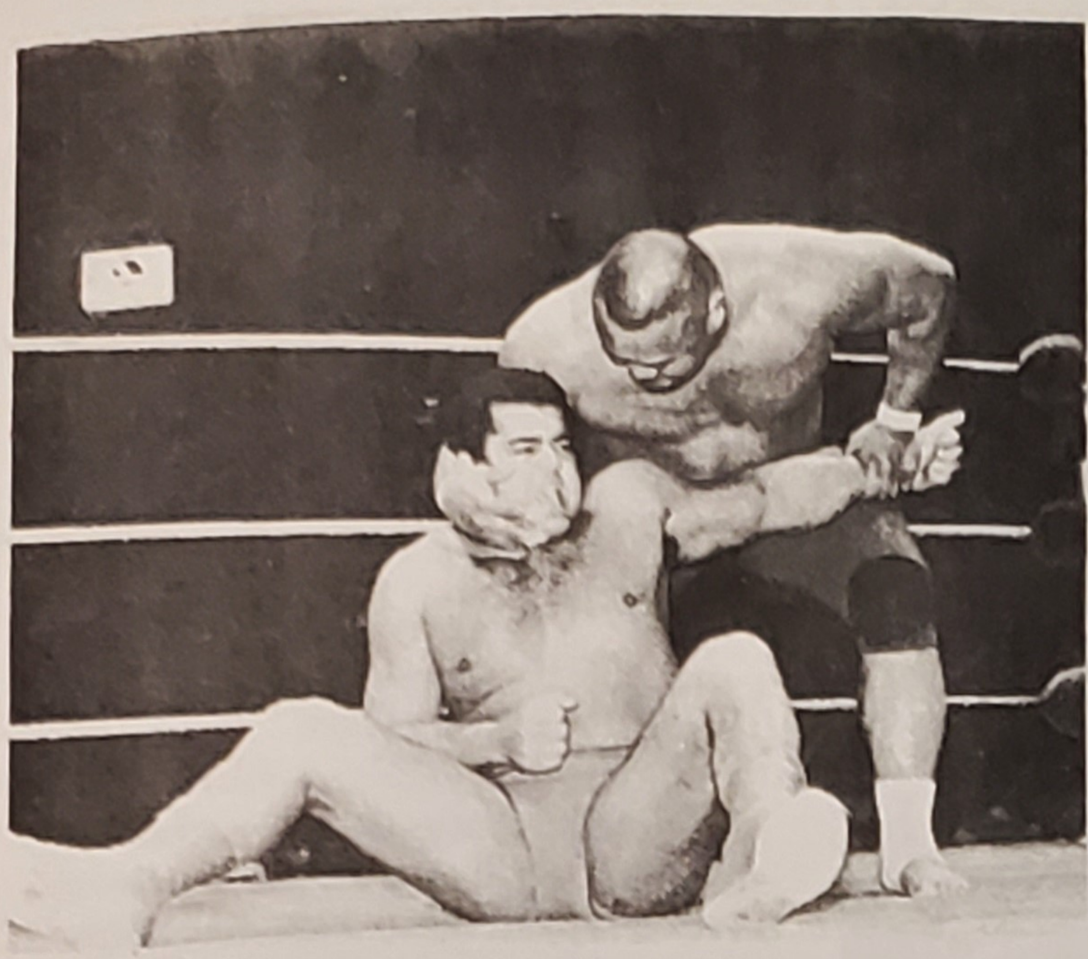
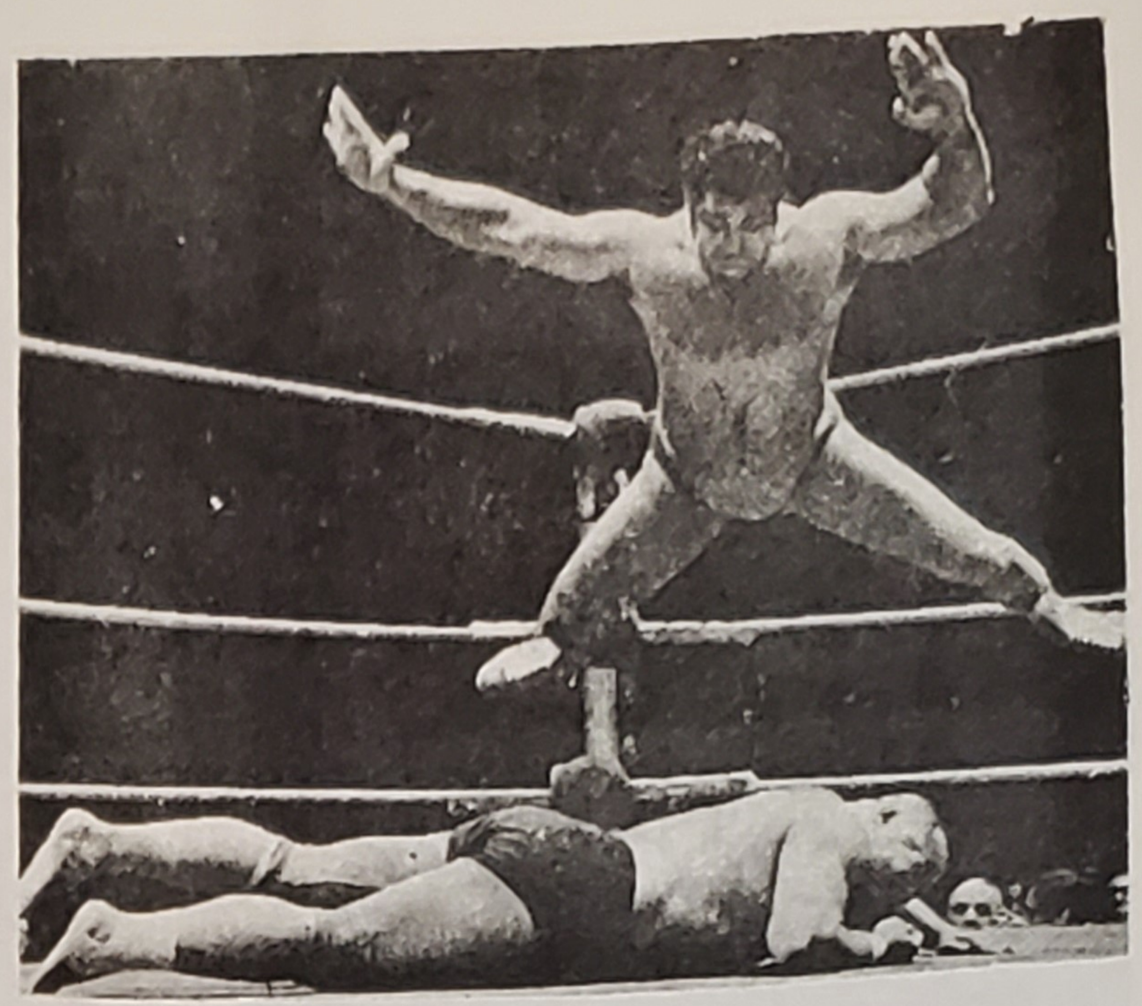
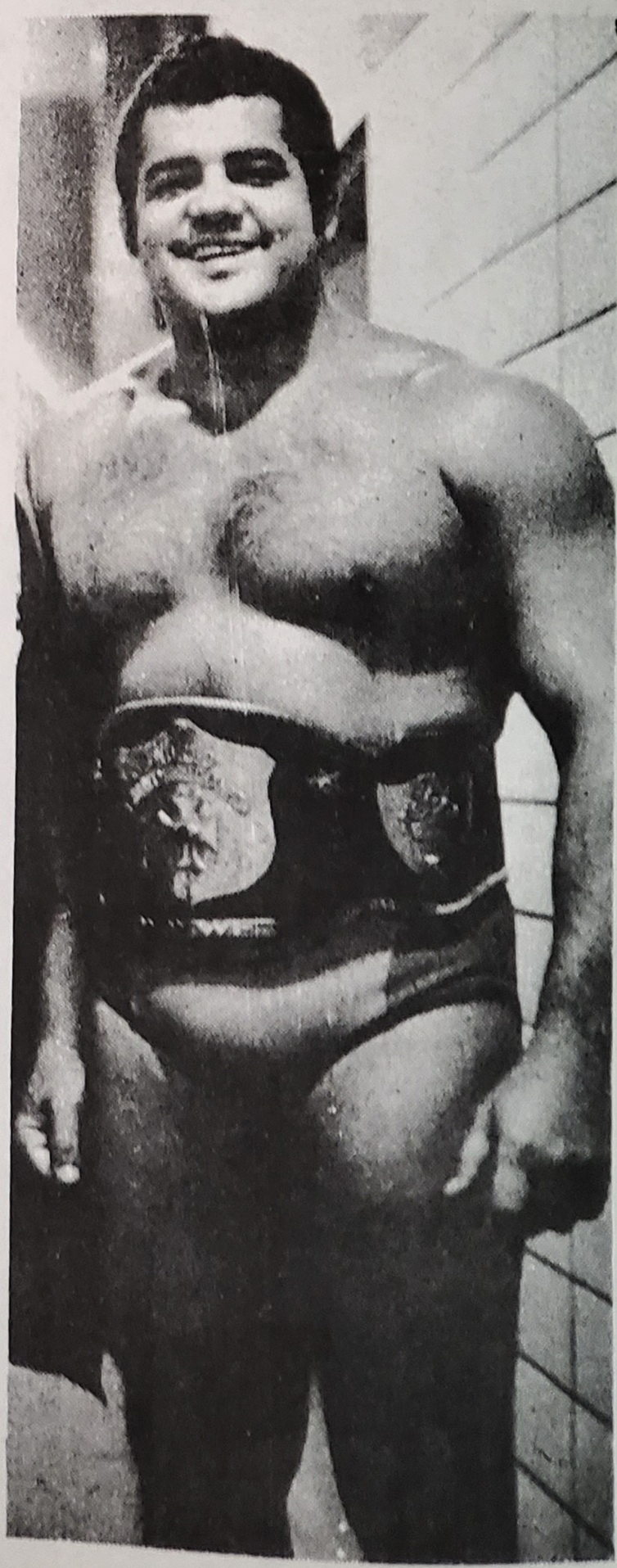




Tanaka tried to use his dreaded "sleeper" hold to defeat Morales, but as with all his rivals the agility of Pedro proved too much for Tanaka to handle.

A vicious body-slam by Morales finished off Tanaka, and a weary but happy and proud Champion retained his belt.

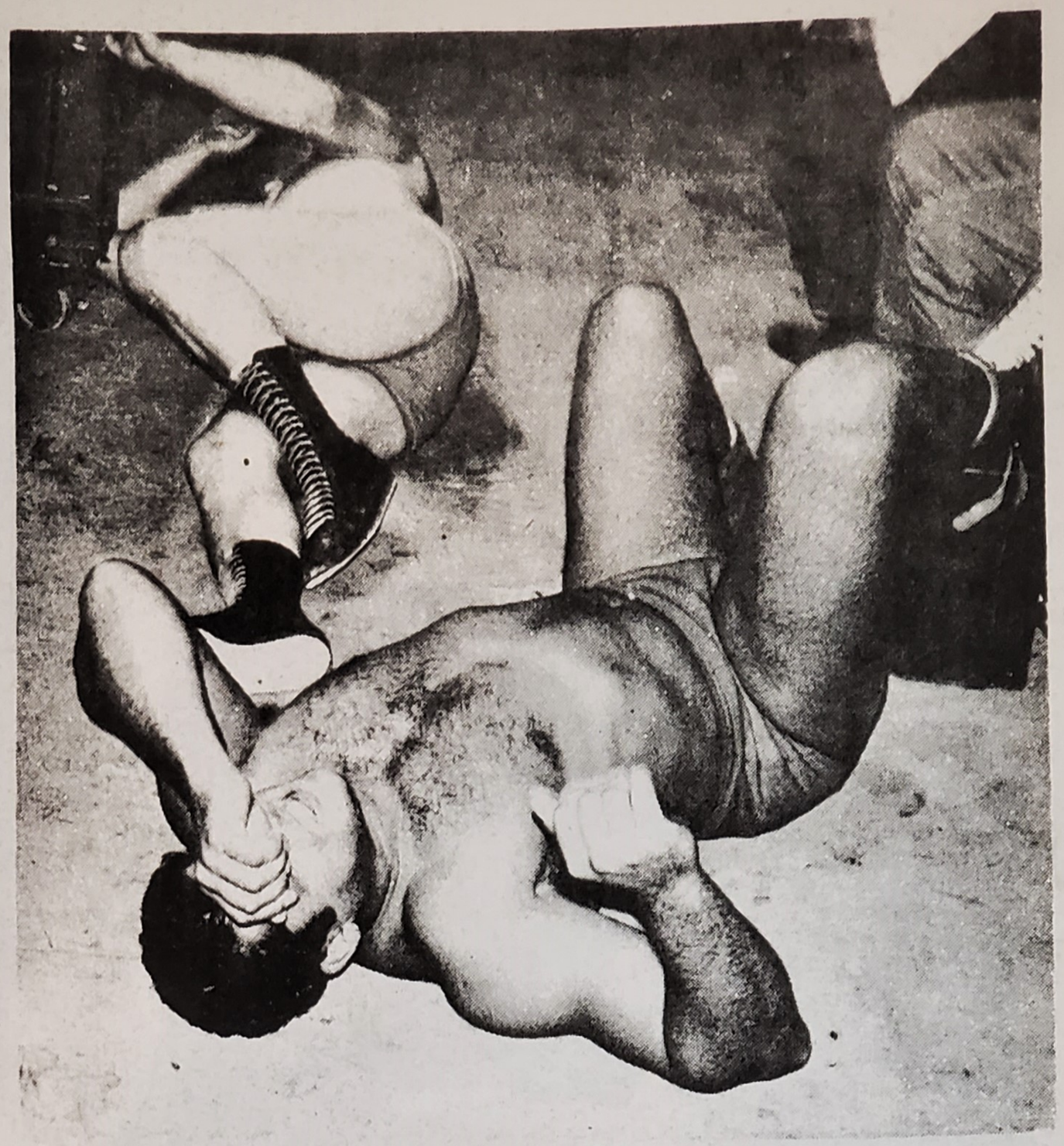


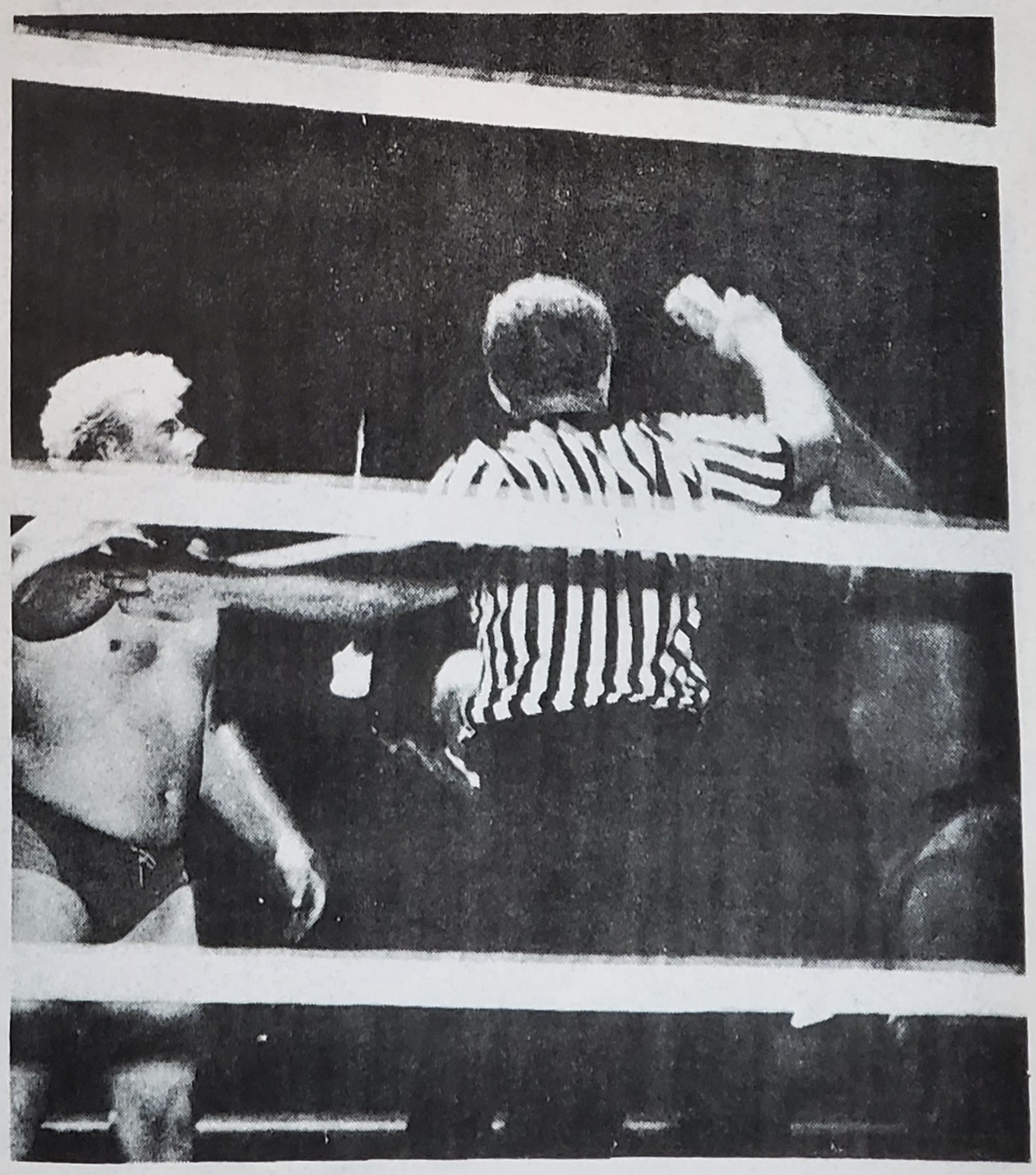
Pedro

vs

Ray Stevens

Another who engaged in a brutal match with Morales was the 'Blonde Bomber' Ray Stevens; their clash in San Francisco ended when Morales returned to the ring in time after both were sent flying out of the ring. Stevens, of course, didn't agree with the ruling of the referee.

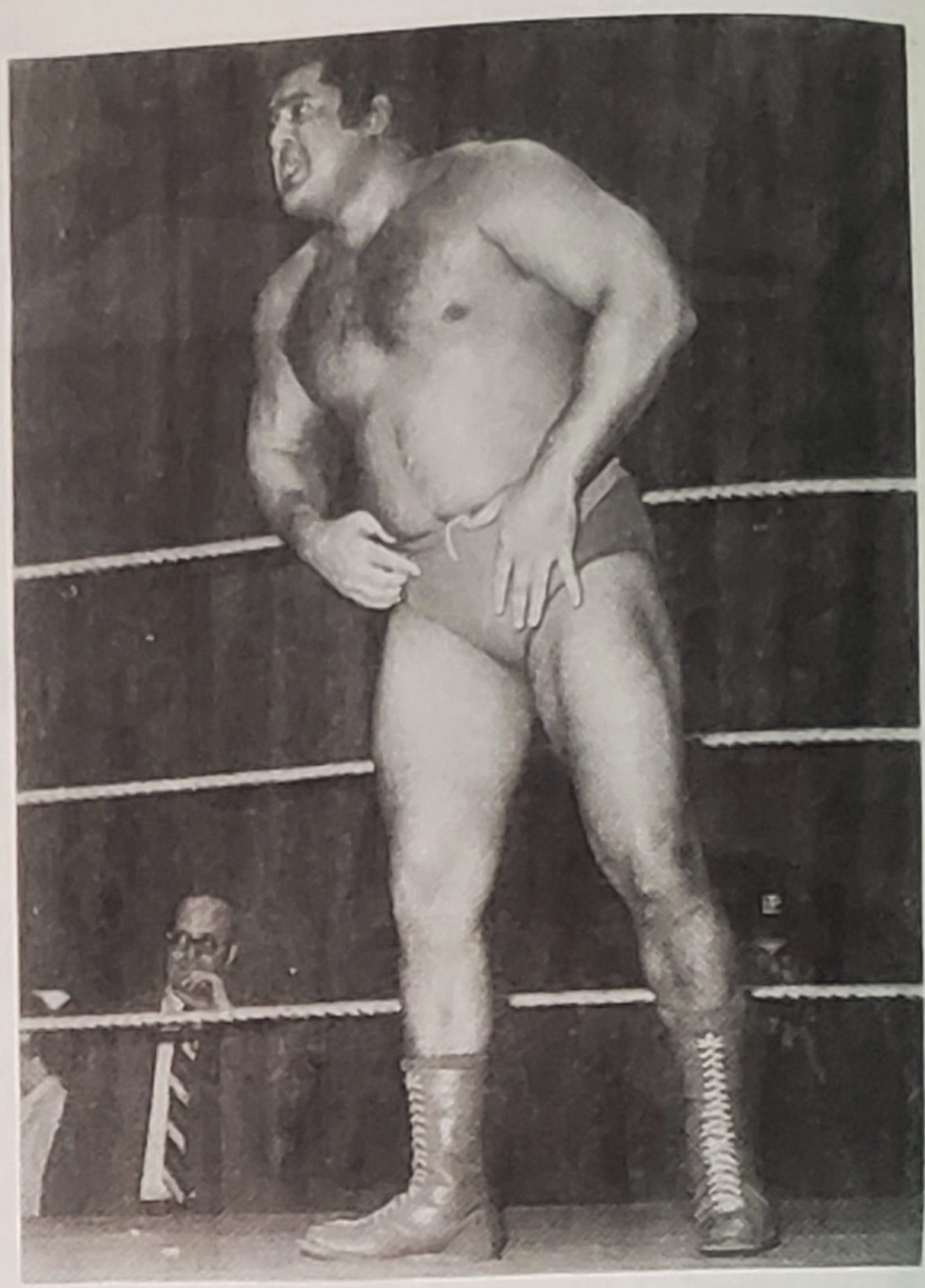


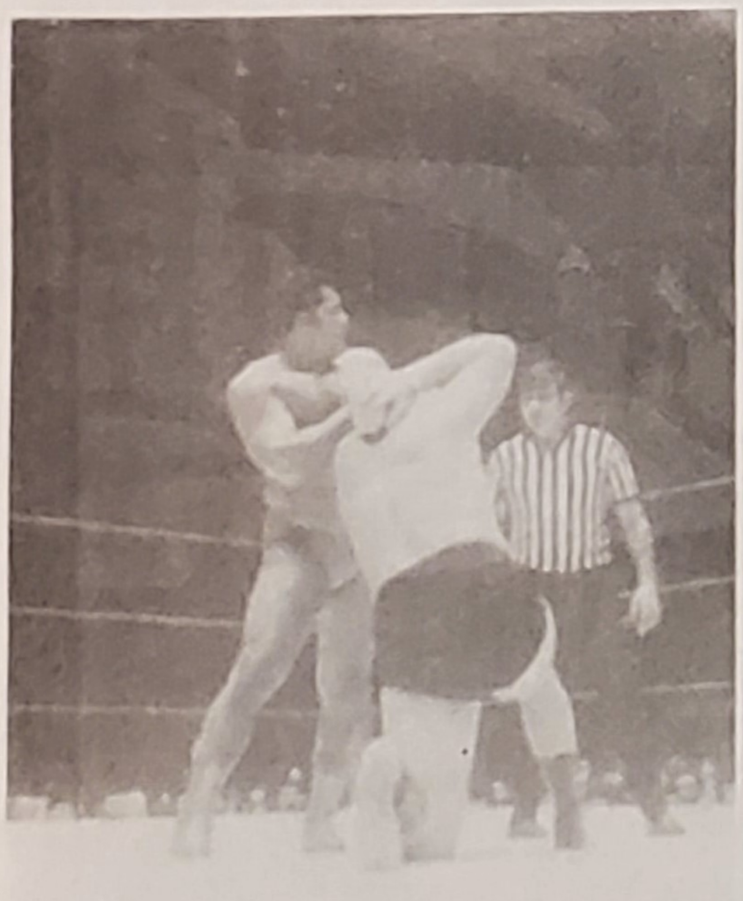


Pedro vs "Crazy Luke" Graham

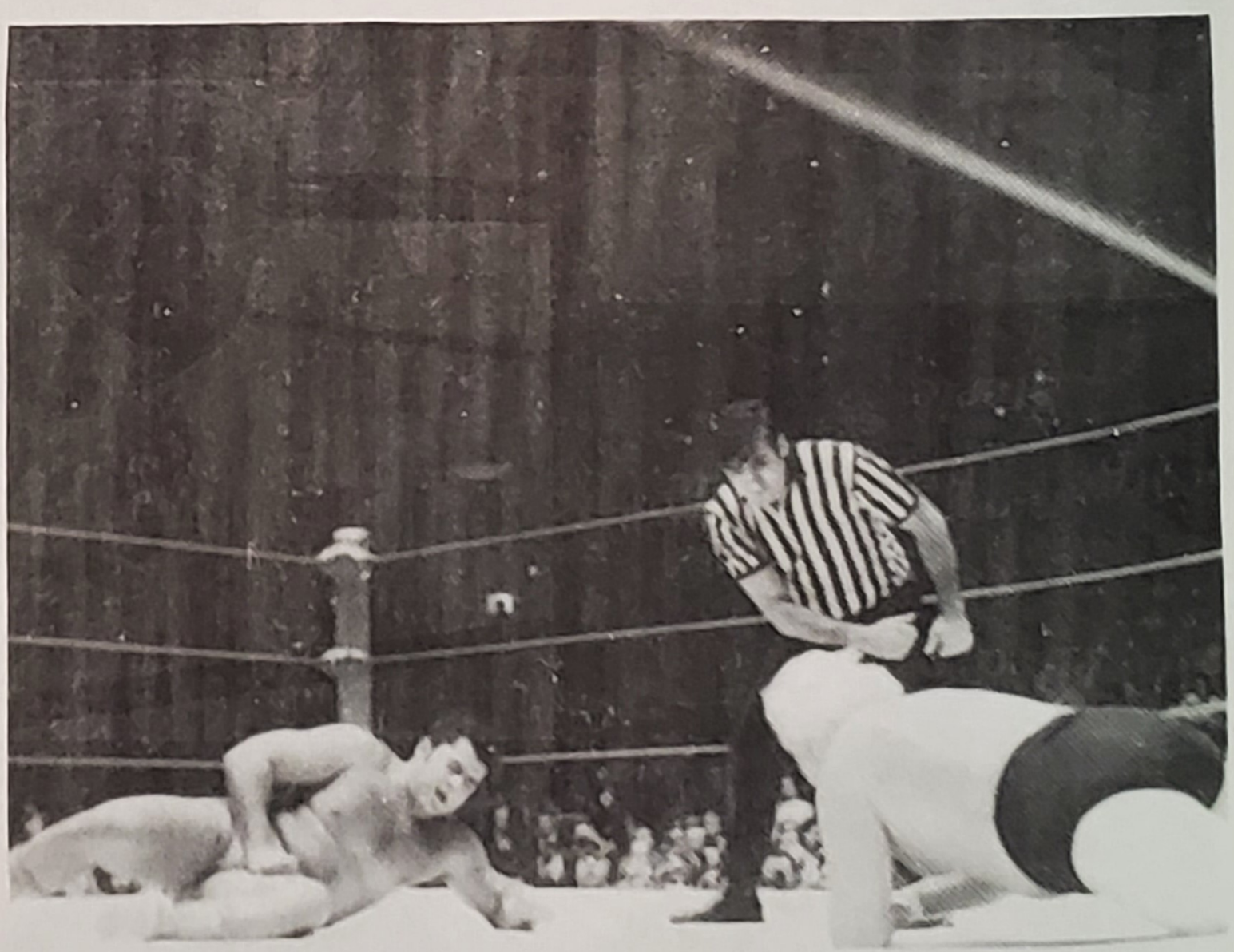
One of the wildest matches Morales has had in Madison Square Garden was against that 'nut', 'Crazy Luke' Graham. The ill feelings between Graham and Morales began when both had wrestled on the west coast and had traded the W.W.A. belt, Graham having taken the belt from Pedro for a short time, in a match in which Morales swore he had been fouled.

Pedro told Graham. "Come on, fight like a man!"

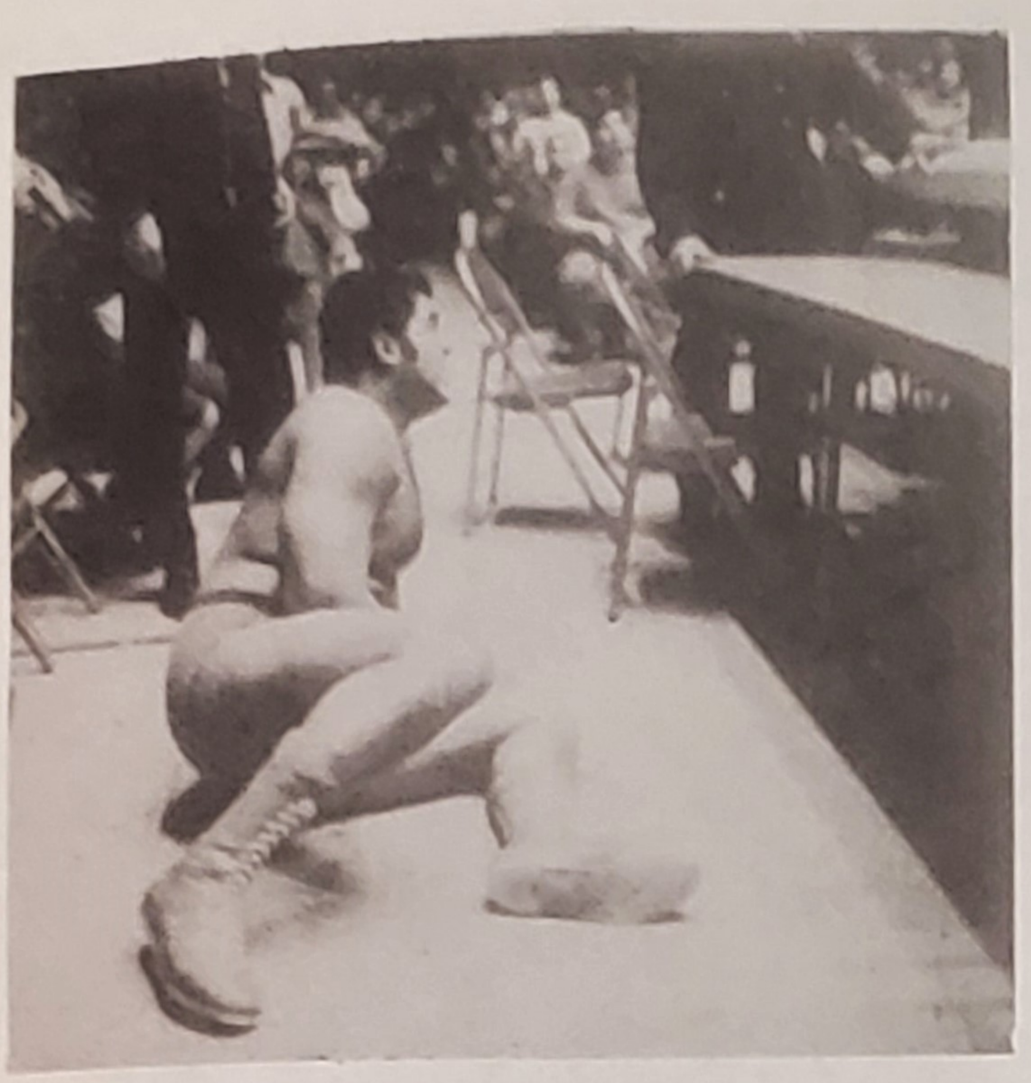




Pedro used a wrist-lock to weaken Graham.



Morales is in pain after Graham had landed a foul kick in breaking loose from a hold clamped on him by Pedro.



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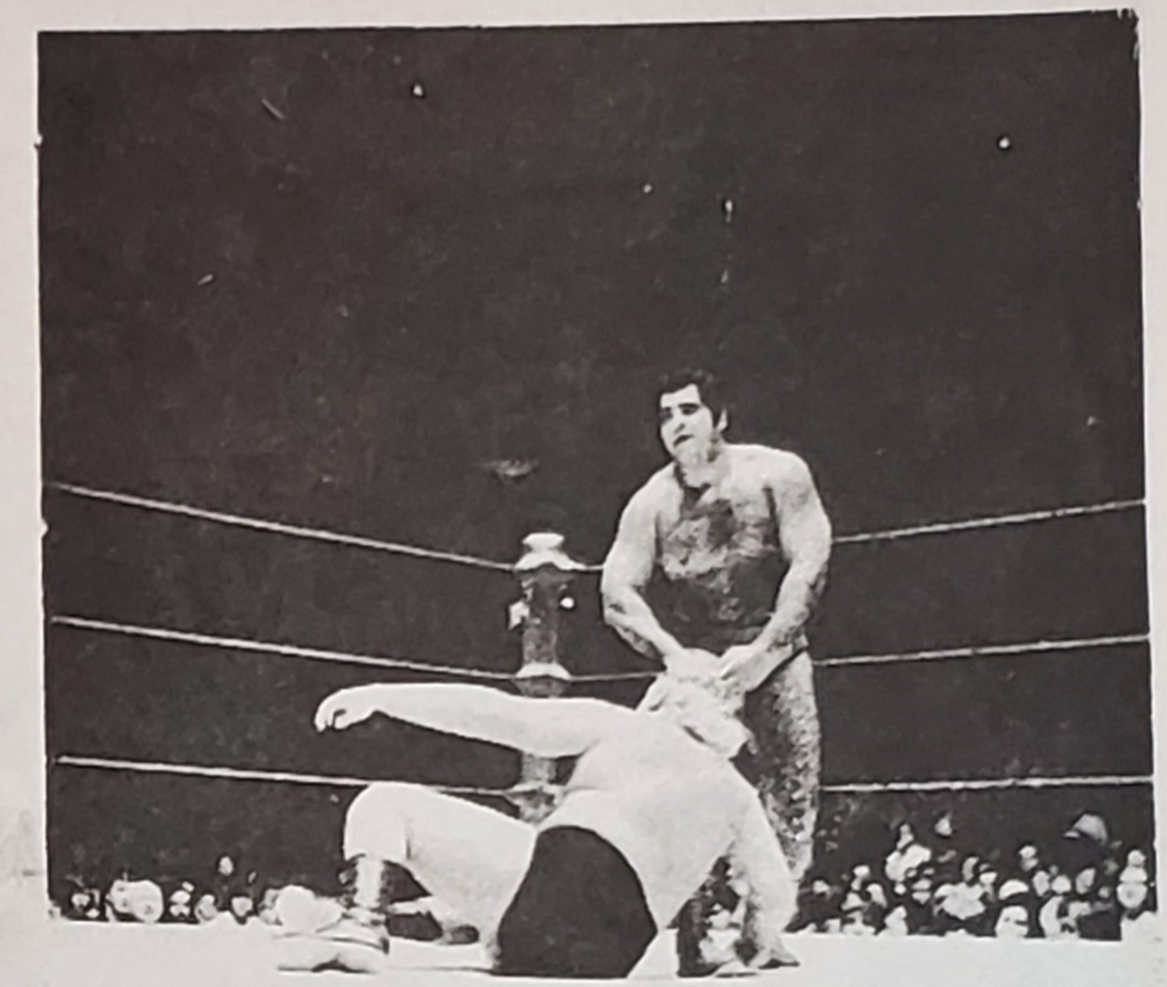
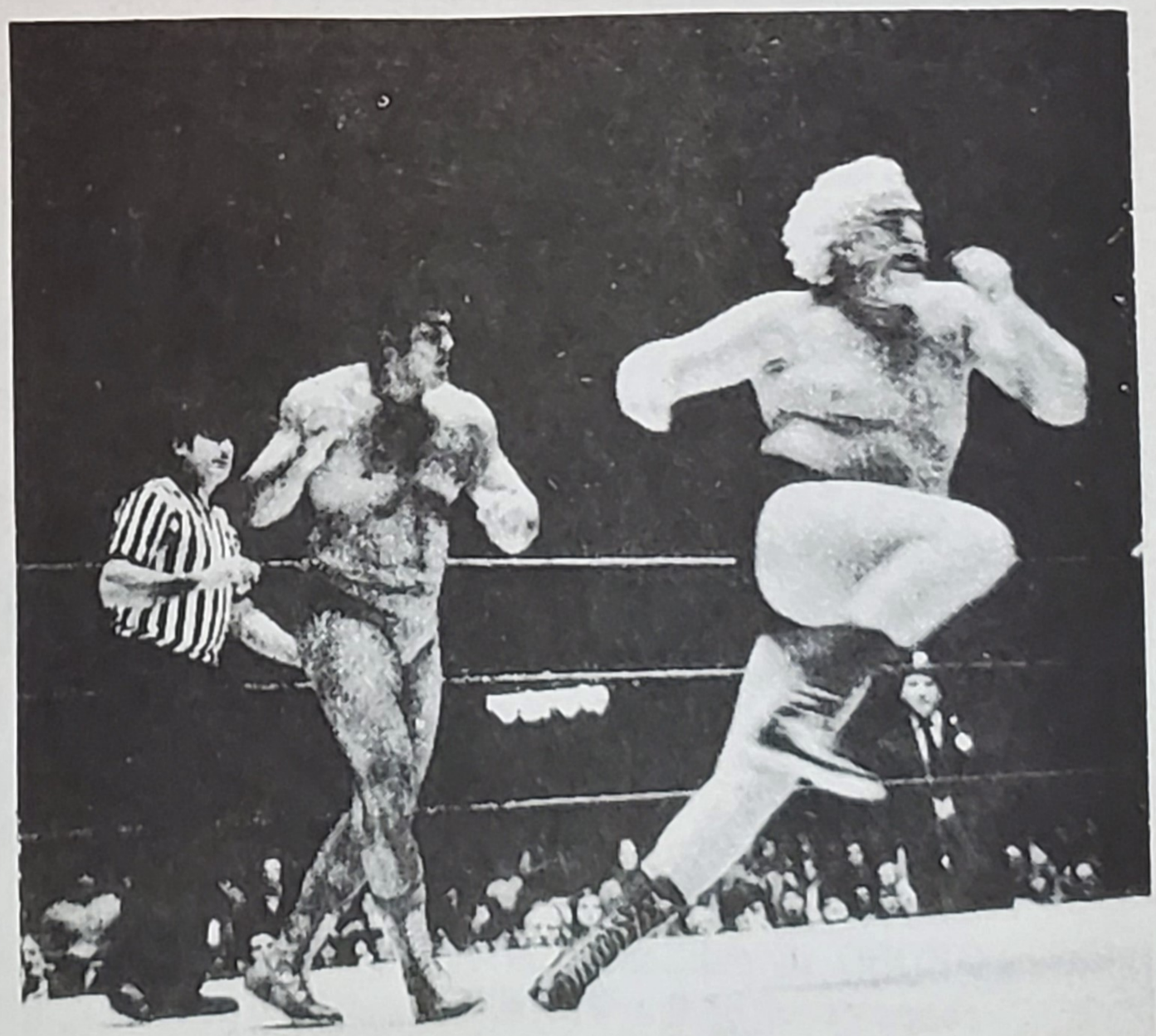
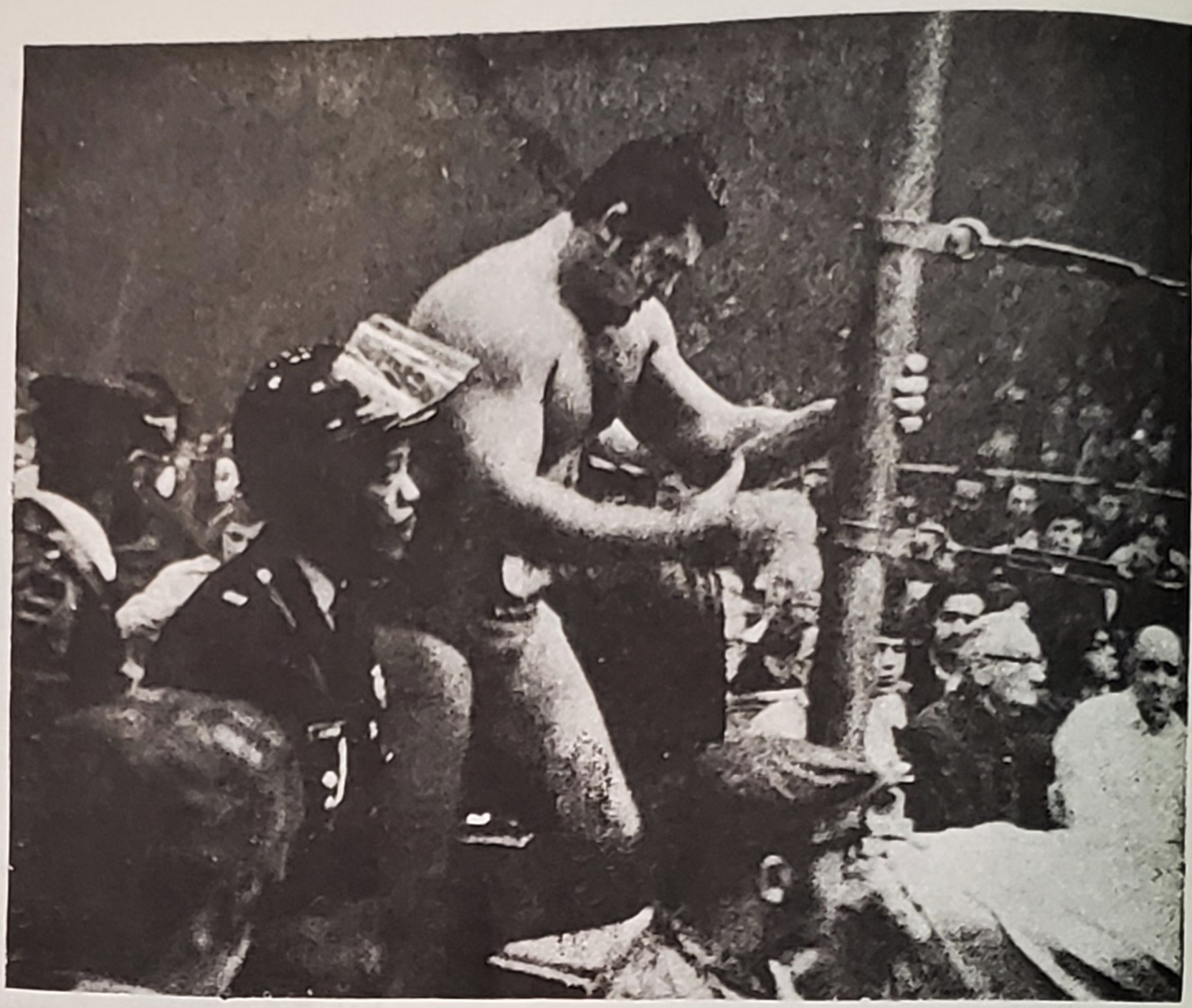


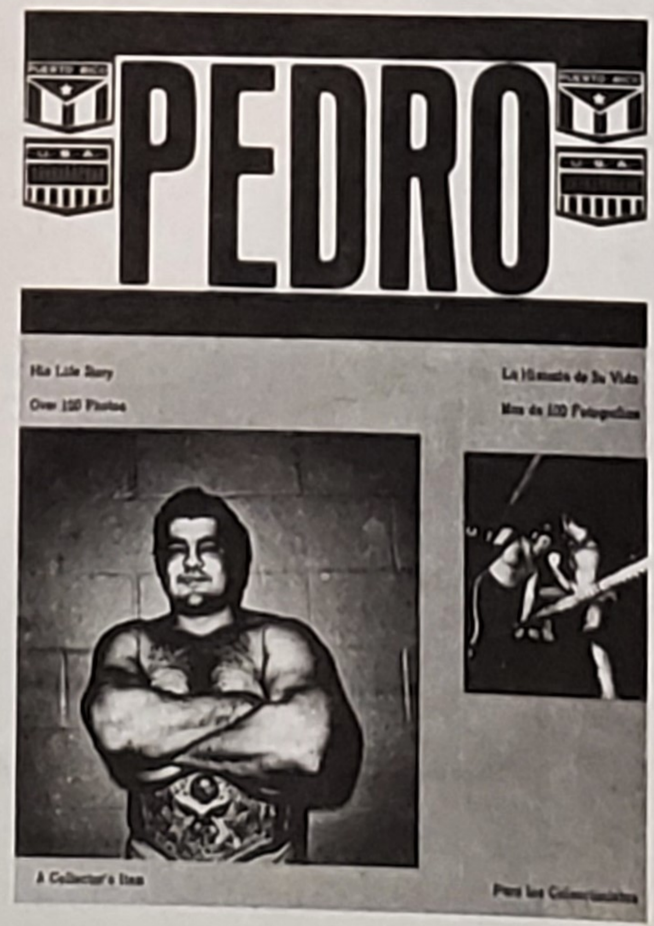
Morales was thrown out of the ring by Graham, but he came back fighting mad, and worked over Graham with such vigor that he soon had 'Crazy Luke' in full retreat.





The fans loved Pedro all over––even during his trip to Japan, it was the same old story.

HIS VERY OWN BOOK.



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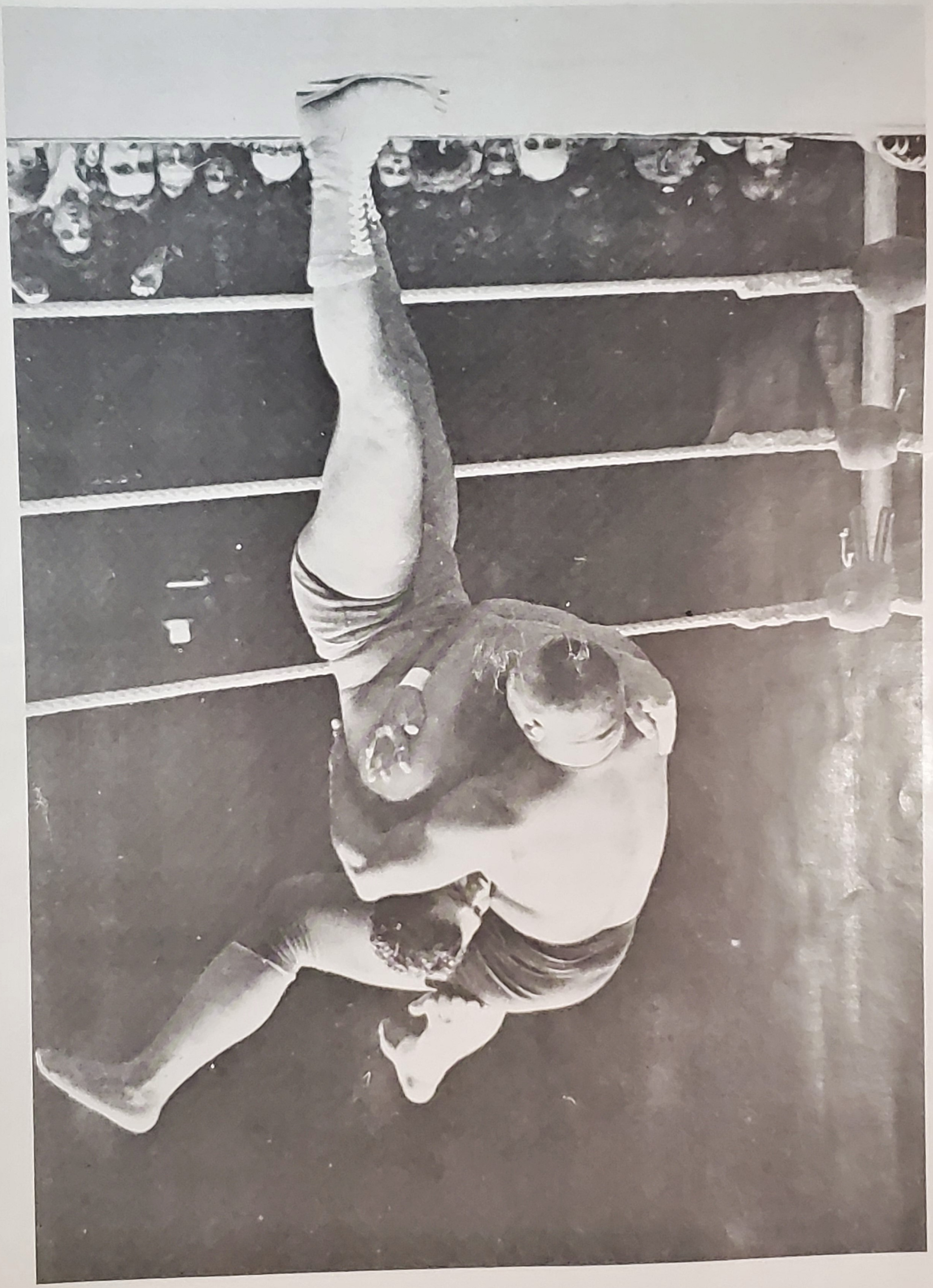
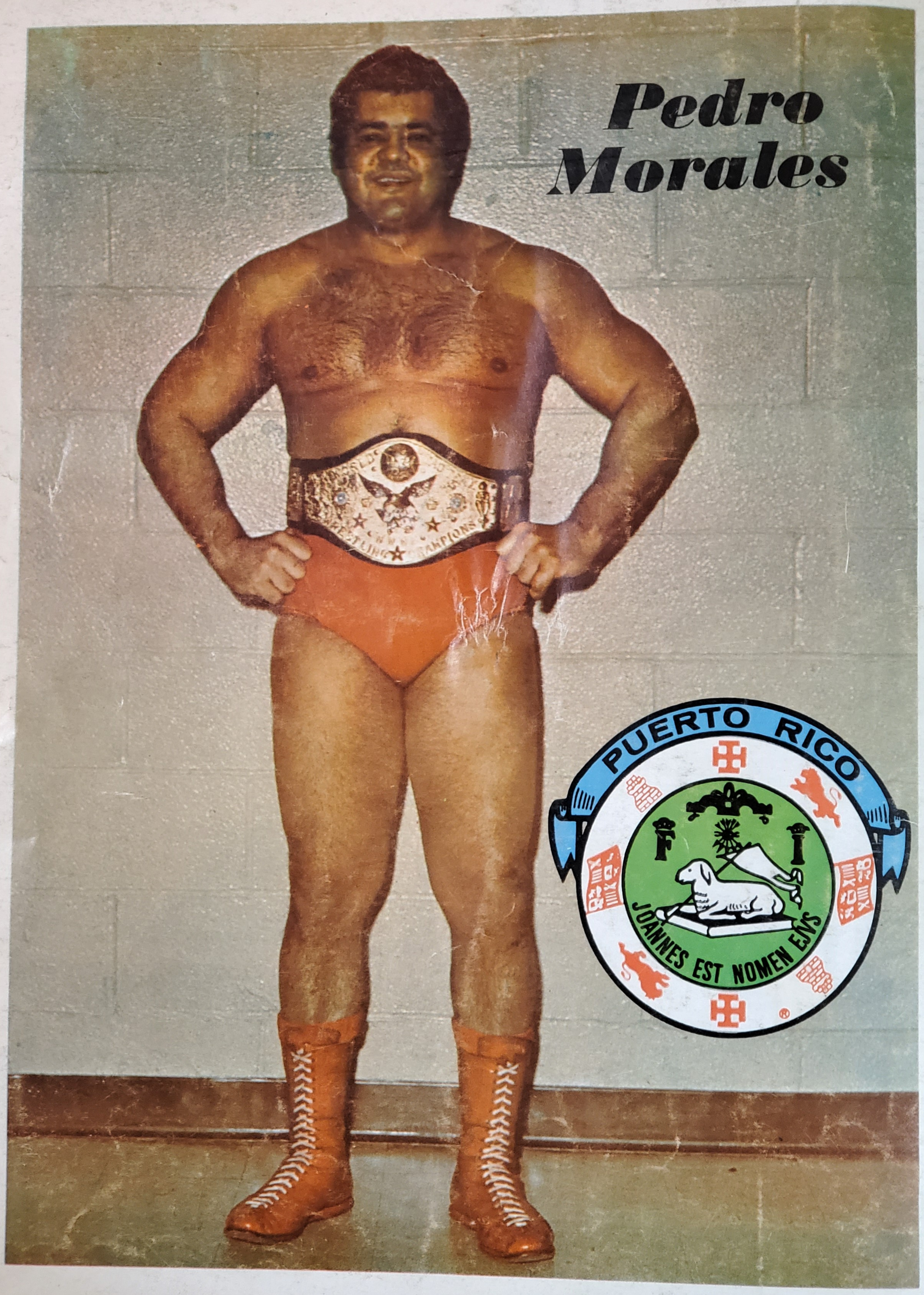
Pedro Morales